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# THE NEW LUCIAN



# THE NEW LUCIAN

BEING

*A SERIES OF  
DIALOGUES OF THE DEAD*

BY

H. D. TRAILL

NEW EDITION, REVISED AND ENLARGED

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## TO E. T.

“LIVE joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which He hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity; for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.”— ECCL. IX. 9, 10.

*What matter though such things have never been,  
Nor shall be? the Ecclesiast hath said,  
Though but in mockery the Samosatene  
Imagined his confabulating dead?  
What matter though nor knowledge nor device,  
Nor work nor wisdom in the grave there be?—  
Does not the Preacher bid us once and twice  
Live out in joy love's life of vanity?  
So live we, then! nor heed what whisper tells  
That closest union heaviest reckoning pays  
In shock of loss and anguish of farewells  
At that eternal parting of the ways.*



## NOTE

OF the fifteen Dialogues included in this volume, nine are reprints—with such corrections as have been rendered necessary by lapse of time, and with, in at least one instance, a considerable increment of fresh matter—from the original edition of “The New Lucian,” published in 1884.

The Dialogues severally entitled “Parnell and Butt,” and “Wilkes and Lord Sandwich,” have appeared respectively in the *Fortnightly Review*, and in *Macmillan's Magazine*, to the proprietors of which my thanks are due for permission to republish.

The remaining four, viz. “Gladstone and Gordon,” “Tennyson and Virgil,” “Johnson and Coleridge,” and “Napoleon, Michelet, and Renan,” were written expressly for this volume.





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# THE NEW LUCIAN

## I.

### GLADSTONE AND GORDON

GLAD. At last we meet, General Gordon! And only now, though I have sought you from the very day of my arrival. Strange that I should have been so long in finding my way to you.

GOR. Enough that you have succeeded in doing so, Mr. Gladstone. You are at least more fortunate than your expeditions.

GLAD. The comparison is wounding, and the wound is, in my humble judgment, not wholly deserved. Nevertheless, I would not for a moment be understood as alleging the slightest right to complain of it. And I will even add, if I may do so without impertinence, that I admire the magnanimity which could find in such a subject the material for a pleasantry. But you must have guessed, of course, that it is on that very subject that I wish to speak with you.

GOR. Why should you, then? The whole affair is

ancient history. I am dead and done with, and so are you. I got my summons from the bullet of a Dervish, one January morning in 1885, on the steps of the Palace at Khartoum ; you, I imagine, have only recently received yours—probably in your bed, at Hawarden, with a sorrowing nation gathered round it ; but with that difference——

GLAD. It is just that difference in our fates—that and its causes—which I would fain discuss with you.

GOR. A difference between two dreams of a dream-like past ! Surely we might be better employed.

GLAD. It is no dream to me that men have charged me with your death.

GOR. What if they have ? Do I reproach you ? It is true, of course, that, had you managed our joint business—if my rescue *was* our joint business—a little better, I might probably have looked to outlive you by a few years. As it is, you have outlived me by more than a round dozen. Still, here you are at last. And here am I. What does it matter to either of us now ?

GLAD. To me, much. My action, in your case, has been cruelly, outrageously—it would be straining the obligations of Christian charity, were I to refrain from adding, malignantly—misrepresented ; and even here I cannot repress my desire to vindicate it.

GOR. To what end ? There is no one here for you to convince. Neither a restive party, nor its puzzled press, nor the uneasy public behind both. And to

whom else did you ever think it necessary to justify yourself?

GLAD. You might have spared me that taunt, General Gordon. I have my own conscience to satisfy—and you!

GOR. One of the two must surely have been long satisfied already, while as to the other—well, the other is not worth satisfying. It were a task so easy as to be unworthy of your powers.

GLAD. Easy!

GOR. Yes; what could be easier to you? I am a mere survival—people have often told me so—from the ages of faith, and you could have no sort of trouble with me. I feel sure that, after listening to you for half an hour, I should be fully convinced that nothing could have been more perfectly planned than the expedition that failed to relieve me, and that it would be the height of injustice to blame any human being for its failure. Its failure, did I say? I am not at all sure, sir, that if you were to exert your oratorical powers still a little more, you couldn't persuade me that the expedition actually succeeded.

GLAD. To establish the former and less ambitious proposition would fully satisfy my modest wants. I own I should like to convince you that everything was done that was reasonably possible to ensure the success of that ill-starred enterprise.

GOR. And I, Mr. Gladstone, should like nothing better than to be converted to that belief myself.

GLAD. Everything that could possibly be foreseen was provided against.

• GOR. Everything? Even the danger of delay?

GLAD. We acted in that matter on the best expert advice.

GOR. Perhaps; when you could force yourselves to act at all. But what of the precious months you let pass while you were making up your minds? Did your expert advisers advise you to let them slip away? . . . You will not say so, Mr. Gladstone. Wolseley knew Egypt too well to give such advice, and I know Wolseley better than to suspect him of doing so.

GLAD. General Gordon, I will deal plainly with you. If any delay occurred in the commencement of our preparations, you yourself were in a measure responsible for it. For some considerable space of time, in the year 1884, we believed that it was in your power to secure your own personal safety—you do not even now deny that such was the case—by withdrawal from Khartoum; and I will admit that we waited for a certain period in the hope that you might, at last, see fit to do so.

GOR. In other words, Mr. Gladstone, you assumed that, to save my own skin, I should, in the last resort, consent to commit an act of treachery and cowardice. Yet what excuse had I ever given you for that assumption? Did I seem to value my life so much that I should have been suspected of being willing to buy it back from fate at so infamous a price?

GLAD. I do not recognise the transaction in your account of it.

GOR. Do you not? Then let me quote from one of my despatches to Baring, in which I describe it still more plainly. I said that it would be the "climax of meanness if, after having pledged myself to undertake the removal of the garrison and population of Khartoum—if, after having compelled them to submit to sacrifices for the defence of the town, and to expose themselves to the certain vengeance of the Mahdists in the event of its capture," I were to sneak away and leave them to their fate. I added that I felt sure that whatever Baring might be obliged to say officially and diplomatically, "I should have his support—and that of every man professing himself a gentleman—in private." You knew, did you not, Mr. Gladstone, that I had thus expressed myself to the British agent at Cairo, for communication to Her Majesty's Government?

GLAD. I cannot profess to carry all the diplomatic correspondence of that anxious period in my head, but I have no doubt that you did write in that sense to Sir Evelyn Baring. At any rate, let us take it that you did.

GOR. And yet you thought that I was capable of being false to the standard of conduct I had there set before myself, of violating my pledged word, of covering myself with dishonour!

GLAD. It is not for me to question your decision



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on such a matter; but you must permit me to remind you that what you conceived to be your own moral obligations were not necessarily those of the British Government.

GOR. No! Not when I had been commissioned by that Government to effect the safe removal of the garrisons and civil subjects of the Khadive in the Soudan?

GLAD. I must invite you to "distinguish," General Gordon. Your right and duty to execute that commission were contingent on certain conditions; which conditions——

GOR. Well?

GLAD. Well? Had they been fulfilled?

GOR. Had they failed?

GLAD. Why, surely, yes. Come, General Gordon, recall the circumstances. Did you not believe, when you started for the Soudan, that your influence over the savage and fanatical followers of the Mahdi——

GOR. You mean "the people rightly struggling to be free"?

GLAD. —Were so commanding, that you would be able to pacify the country and secure the peaceful evacuation of its military strongholds? Instead of which you found that it taxed your powers to the utmost to guard your own life. Your influence was confined to Khartoum and its garrison, and even there you found it a hard enough matter to prevent the one from being captured or the other from surrendering.

GOR. Suppose me to admit my miscalculation; and then?

GLAD. Well, then, General Gordon, it follows—does it not?—that the original contract between yourself and the Government had become impossible of fulfilment through failure of one of its fundamental conditions, and that a new one had to be substituted in conformity with the equities of the case. We had to—but you were about to say something—

GOR. Not I, Mr. Gladstone. I would not interrupt your lucid statement of the case for the world. What a thing it is to have the legal mind—and style! It is more beautiful even than the diplomatic, though I remember that at Khartoum, while I still had the pleasure of reading diplomatic communications—I mean before I was surrounded—no, I beg pardon, I should have said “hemmed in,” not “surrounded”—I used to think that nothing could beat one of Egerton’s despatches. . . . You were saying—?

GLAD. I was saying, that when the event proved that you had undertaken a commission which you had not the power to execute, the original contract into which we had entered with you lapsed, and it became necessary to frame a new one conformable to the equities of the case.

GOR. I appreciate the impressiveness of the phrase, sir. It makes it seem almost indecent to object to any contract that could be so described, however

disastrously it might "pan out," as the gold-washers put it, for one of the contracting parties.

GLAD. Now, what were those equities, General Gordon?

GOR. Ah, what? I suppose they included what lawyers call an "equity of redemption." You regarded me as mortgaged, so to speak, to the Mahdi, and you considered that you retained the right of redeeming me if you liked; but not otherwise.

GLAD. The analogy is most misleading. Surely I need not say that——

GOR. Otherwise, of course, you had the option of allowing Mr. Mortgagee Mahommed Achmet to foreclose upon me in Khartoum, which he proceeded to do, most effectually. Unfortunately he was not obliged to give you the usual six months' notice, though, by the way, it might not have helped me much if he had been. As it was, you had full four months' notice of the intended foreclosure before I was surrounded—I should say hemmed in.

GLAD. General Gordon, I entreat you to be serious. You must know very well that we recognised our obligation to you as our emissary—recognised it as clear and absolute. We were bound—we always acknowledged ourselves bound—to use every effort to secure your personal safety. But pardon me if I limit that obligation to yourself. Pardon me if I decline to extend it to any other persons for whose

safe deportation from the Soudan you may have imprudently—I use the word with no offensive intent, but as simply and neutrally descriptive of the circumstances—pledged yourself.

GOR. What! Not if I had pledged your Government also?

GLAD. That depends upon your express or implied authority to pledge us.

GOR. Authority? Why, it was written large across the face of my commission. The withdrawal of the Soudanese garrison and population was an essential part of the policy of evacuating the Soudan. And what, pray, was the authority for that policy?

GLAD. The order of His Highness the Khedive of Egypt.

GOR. Oh! Not the “advice” of Her Majesty’s Government transmitted to His Highness through Her Majesty’s Agent and Consul-General at Cairo?

GLAD. Surely advice is not command.

GOR. Never? Ask the Rajah of a protected Indian State, and the British Resident at his court, what they think of that proposition. Advice is command whenever Mentor advises with a pistol at the head of Telemachus. You were in military occupation of Cairo. Tewfik’s tottering throne was propped by your bayonets; the whole civil administration of the country was in your hands. Yet when you suggest to him that he should abandon the whole of his dominions south of Wady Halfa, I am

to understand that that was the mere expression of a "pious opinion." No, Mr. Gladstone, it would be playing with words, and what is worse, it would be trifling with facts, to maintain so absurd a contention. When you advised—which is to say ordered—the Khedive to abandon the Soudan, you took over the entire responsibilities as its ruler, and you were as much bound as he was to relieve the garrisons planted in the territory, he was about to surrender to barbarism.

GLAD. I cannot admit that theory of our responsibilities, General Gordon.

GOR. Of course you can't. I knew you couldn't. That is why I said we might be better employed than in discussing the point; for I could admit no other theory of your responsibilities, and therefore of mine. I pledged my word—I pledged your word—to act upon it, and I held, and hold, that you were bound in honour and conscience to adopt my engagements.

GLAD. My conscience exonerated me of any such obligation.

GOR. I know it did. Your policy was approved by the only monitor you ever recognised in your public acts.

GLAD. Sustained by the assurances of that voice.

GOR. *That* voice! There were more than fifteen score of them. Three hundred and two "still small

voices," a majority of fourteen, sustained you, I am well aware—even after Khartoum had fallen.

GLAD. The sneer is unworthy of you, General Gordon, and I repel it with indignation. You have no right to say that I took the vote of a majority in the House of Commons, or the approval of any other body of fallible human beings, for the voice of my conscience.

GOR. You are right, Mr. Gladstone, and I ask your pardon. The gibe escaped me unawares—like some others which found their way into my journals, and have since, I fear, given pain to several estimable persons. A man has enough to do to look after his own conscience without busying himself about his neighbour's.

GLAD. I will not disguise from you that it would give me acute pain to be misjudged by you. All the world knows that you were a deeply religious man.

GOR. Does all the world know that? Then it must have solved one of its obscurest problems with extraordinary expedition since my departure. It now apparently knows what religion is, and who they are that may be truly called religious.

GLAD. Surely, General Gordon, there has never been much difference of opinion on the point—at any rate among the wise and virtuous.

GOR. No? Then the wise and virtuous have excommunicated and burnt one another under a

misapprehension. For they must certainly have thought they differed at the time when they were launching the anathema or piling the faggots.

GLAD. These were but the unhappy disputes of rival sects. It is in the cause of dogma and not of true religion that so much blood has been shed.

GOR. Yes; but what is dogma? The belief of somebody else which we ourselves reject. When our own beliefs are in question, we talk of "faith" as of the very essence of religion, and doubt whether it is not indispensable to salvation. If one cannot be religious without dealing in a large stock of affirmation of the unknowable, I fear I had no claim to the description.

GLAD. "Pure religion and undefiled is to visit the fatherless children and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself from the world."

GOR. Nor yet on those grounds either. The world, it is true, had not much chance of spotting me, for I always gave it a wide berth; but I did not devote my life to works of charity. I just did what my hand found to do, and did it with all my might.

GLAD. I conceive, General Gordon, that the Apostle is *not* here to be interpreted with strict literality. "Visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction" is, I think, to be understood as symbolical of the unselfish life—of the life of those who, whether in the private circle or in that larger sphere of usefulness which Providence opens to—a—to some among us,

have endeavoured, to the best of their humble ability, to promote the happiness of their fellow-men.

GOR. Ah, if we could only say that of ourselves, Mr. Gladstone! But I fear that we should both of us have been described in the language of the old Puritans as "men of blood."

GLAD. General Gordon, you shock me inexpressibly.

● GOR. By my description of myself or of you?

GLAD. To you it is no reproach. You were a crusading soldier, while I was——

GOR. A great party leader, who never saw a shot fired in anger in your life. Nevertheless, I am of opinion that more men have been cut off by your policy than by my sword. But is that necessarily a reproach? It is probably true of most statesmen who have governed great nations. If your conscience acquits you of blood-guiltiness as mine acquits me——

GLAD. It does! it does!

GOR. Then why trouble about the matter? You have acted according to your lights and your sense of duty, and if many men have suffered from your action many, on the other hand, have profited. Perhaps, on the whole, there is a balance of benefaction in your favour. I hope so, as I hope there is in mine. But do not let us deceive ourselves, Mr. Gladstone. Do not let us imagine that we were labouring disinterestedly for humanity when we were simply doing with our whole strength the work which lay nearest to our hand. Well for us if to the joy



of struggle and success we could add the calming assurance that we were obeying the will and furthering the purposes of God.

GLAD. This sounds too much like fatalism. Religion should be a reasonable service. There is a passage in Bishop Butler which——

GOR. Which I am afraid would not edify me. I have never reasoned out my faith nor sat down to consider, as I understand that many learned doctors have done, how to make the best of both worlds. I was not enough interested in the one I have now left. But if to be religious is to feel everywhere and always that the things that are seen are temporal, and the things that are unseen are eternal; if it is to have felt your life from manhood upwards hang as loosely about you as an old and outworn garment, and as ready to be cast lightly aside; if it is, at all times and in all places, but most of all in the desert and at midnight and with death at hand, to be conscious of the nothingness of the world and of the nearness of God—then I may say, without boastfulness, that I was a religious man.

GLAD. What you describe, General Gordon, is the religion of mysticism, the religion of trance and ecstasy; and though I would not for the world be understood to disparage it, I cannot forbear to point out that the human race owes, upon the whole, a larger measure of its happiness to what I may call the more social forms of the religious sentiment.

GOR. It may be so ; but that was what my religion meant to me. Nor could I have performed its silent rites in a more solemn temple than you unwittingly dedicated to it in that beleaguered stronghold of the African wilderness. Other Governments have sent their emissaries to death, but none before yours—I say it in all seriousness—has ever provided one of them with so purifying a preparation for the world to come. Many a time has that thought occurred to me in my midnight vigils, looking forth over the boundless waste of sands or upwards at the unfathomable vault of stars. I drew ever nearer to the Eternal as death drew nearer to me. The world of Time and Space, the world of Ministers and Parliaments, of diplomatists and despatches—nay, even of blood-thirsty besiegers and faint-hearted, famine-stricken besieged, had become shadows to me long before the end ; and it was the longed-for light of the Real and the Everlasting that came flooding in upon me with the rifle bullet that pierced my brain.

GLAD. You died the death of a hero and a Christian, General Gordon. Tragic indeed is the thought that you should have died in vain.

GOR. In vain ?

GLAD. Ay, surely ! though to me, of all men, it is bitter to admit it. Was it not vain, and worse, to have sacrificed so noble a life in a bootless struggle with barbarians, to have left them the body of so renowned a soldier as the perpetual trophy of their conquest ?

GOR. Perpetual! Their conquest! Is it possible, Mr. Gladstone, that you do not know, that you have not heard? Yet why should I be surprised? You would not be in the way of meeting them.

GLAD. Of meeting whom?

GOR. The thousands of new-comers—the harvest of a single day of battle—who could have told you that the power of the Dervishes is shattered; that the Khalifa is a fugitive; that the British and Egyptian flags are flying over the ruined palace of Khartoum.

GLAD. I cannot believe it!

GOR. How strangely apt a commentator is fate! I wrote of Kitchener in my Journal at Khartoum that he was “one of the very few superior British officers with a cool, good head, a hard constitution, and untiring energy, and that if he would take the place he would be the best man to put in as Governor-General of the Soudan.” The Almighty, it seems, was of my opinion, and has given the Soudan into his hands.

GLAD. From whom, General Gordon, have you received this astounding intelligence?

GOR. From the Shade of my victorious enemy, as he, in turn, from the thronging spirits of his slaughtered tribesmen who left their bodies on the field of Omdurman.

GLAD. From the Mahdi?

GOR. Oh, there is no ill-blood between us here. I have long since forgiven him his maltreatment of

my earthly shell. And hardly now could I do otherwise, since the whirligig of time has brought about its revenges, and his own remains have been scattered to the winds. His retinue in Elysium, however, has been swelled by eleven thousand followers.

GLAD. Eleven thousand Dervishes killed!

GOR. Yes, it is a heavy bill. Add to it the slain of '84 and '85—the lives that were laid low by your mandate of evacuation, and my endeavours to execute it, and the total slaughter bulks terribly large. Decidedly, Mr. Gladstone, we were “men of blood.”

GLAD. General Gordon, I wash my hands of all responsibility for the bloody fruits of this reversal of my policy.

GOR. You cannot; for the policy contained the germ of its own reversal, as inevitably bound to spring from it as the flower from the seed. You pronounced the death sentence on those eleven thousand desert-warriors when you ordered the abandonment of the Soudan. But be comforted, Mr. Gladstone. At the same stroke you founded the college which is to rise in my name and to my memory on the ruins of Khartoum.

GLAD. The college!

GOR. Yes; you shall hear more of it hereafter. But, as to that hecatomb of Dervishes of which I have spoken to you, dismiss it from your mind. Appalling as is such a sacrifice of human life, it is yet a far lighter price if measured by its results than

you paid in the deaths of my handful of followers and my own. For the fall of Khartoum purchased nothing but the abandonment of the Soudan to years of tyranny and rapine, of barbarism and unrest, while the slaughter of Omdurman will spread peace and light and mercy throughout a land of darkness and cruel habitations. It is the lesser sacrifice which was the crime ; the greater is its atonement.

## II

### LORD WESTBURY AND BISHOP WILBERFORCE

WEST. I should be sorry, Bishop, to think that you shunned me. We landed here, if you remember, within a day of each other; our obols must have clinked together in the ferryman's pouch. But though you conversed with me affably enough on our first arrival, it must now be many years, according to earthly reckoning, since we last fell in with each other.

WILB. I am sure you will forgive me, Lord Westbury, if I say that I have never sought the society of lawyers.

WEST. Nor I. I found them but depressing company on earth; and, though death could scarcely add to their dulness, it seemed paradoxical to suppose that it would enliven them.

WILB. As sarcastic as ever, I observe.

WEST. Say as outspoken, my dear Bishop, and add, as little malicious on that very account. Malice is a natural exudation in every mind, and it will remain there as a poison if it is not thrown off as

an excretion. It is only the sarcastic, as they are called, who get rid of it by its proper eliminator—the tongue.

WILB. The excretory function was admirably active, then, in your lordship's case; and your mental health, if that, indeed, will insure it, should have been excellent.

WEST. You are good enough to say so. But health is one thing and popularity another. It would have been far better for me, of course, to have only thought what are called ill-natured things of my neighbours than to have said them. Or, if some relief was necessary, I should have committed them only to the discreet guardianship of a diary. But then to do that, one must be a man of discretion; and that, my dear Bishop, is a quality which, unlike yourself in both respects, I neither inherited nor bequeathed.

WILB. Your mind seems secreting very rapidly just now, my lord; and the activity with which you are throwing off its products is rather—— Well, it scarcely tends to enhance the long-deferred pleasure of this interview.

WEST. Indeed! I would not willingly do anything to diminish it. But our subject is, for me, perhaps, a somewhat too stimulating one. Shall we change it for something a little less personal to myself than the mental and moral characteristics of your lordship's very humble servant? Would you discuss with

me the position and prospects of the Church of England?

WILB. With *you*? Impossible!

WEST. Why so? We have more than once exchanged views upon that matter in the House of Lords.

WILB. Yes; as ships exchange broadsides. But I do not care to revive old quarrels in the Shades; and an amicable, mutually helpful discussion of such a subject with *you*, is, I repeat, impossible.

WEST. With *me*? The emphasis on that word is neither complimentary nor altogether—— But I refrain. It is not for me to instruct your lordship in the obligations of charity.

WILB. My dear Lord Westbury, it is not a question of charity. We may wish to discuss colours with a blind man, and may most sincerely lament the affliction that keeps our minds apart. But apart they must remain; and not all the charity in the world woul' bring them together.

WEST. Your lordship's metaphors are discouraging.

WILB. Literal language would, I fear, be more so.

WEST. Not necessarily. I can hardly account ~~it~~ a privilege to be compelled to fit the cap on for myself, especially when the hatter is present, and might relieve me of the task. I should have deemed it more truly polite of you to have said in plain terms that I am spiritually blind.



WILB. Well, suppose me to have said so. What then?

WEST. Then I should only have replied that your lordship pays but an ill compliment to the constitution of a State Church in which for several years I filled a high judicial office.

WILB. That, alas! is true.

WEST. *Alas?* Your interjections, Bishop, are as discouraging as your metaphors. For which was your "alas!" intended? For the affliction of the judge, or for his infliction on the Church? Or for your own indiscretion in speaking evil of dignities?

WILB. You have rebuked me for not dealing plainly with you, Lord Westbury. I trust I shall not now be blamed for the opposite fault. I yielded to no one in admiration for your consummate judicial powers, but I confess I shared the view taken by most good Churchmen of your position with respect to the Church.

WEST. Which was . . . ?

WILB. Nay, you cannot be ignorant of it. Why this pressure upon me to speak plainly?

WEST. Why this need of pressure after your promise of plain speech?

WILB. Well, then . . . which was that your lordship's presence and influence on the Judicial Committee of Privy Council at a time of sore trial for the Church of England was a misfortune of the first magnitude.

WEST. • Because of my “consummate judicial powers.”?

WILB. Because of your lordship’s known laxity of moral principle and complete indifference, or rather utter insensibility, to religious ideas.

WEST. I hesitated just now to remind a bishop of his charity. • I am even more loth to recall to him the name of another of the cardinal virtues—that of faith. You surely cannot think that Providence abandoned the cause of the Church to a perverse and ungodly judge?

WILB. God forbid! I have always believed—it would have been impious to doubt—that you were an instrument in the Divine hand.

WEST. I have always believed it myself.

WILB. I have never doubted that the judgments of the Judicial Committee, during your term of service on it, were overruled for good.

WEST. You mean in a theological sense. Technically, of course, they were final. But if our judgments were divinely protected from error, why object to me as a judge? Must I remind your lordship not only of scriptural virtues but of ecclesiastical formularies? The Twenty-sixth Article declares, if I recollect it rightly, that the efficacy of the sacraments is not diminished by the unworthiness of the minister, and surely what is true of an officiating priest in the discharge of his sacred duties must apply *à fortiori* to that (spiritually speaking) far

lower minister—a lay Chancellor acting as an ecclesiastical appellate judge.

WILB. The comparison savours somewhat of profanity. But your lordship should have finished the Article: "Nevertheless it appertaineth to the discipline of the Church that inquiry be made of evil ministers, and that they be accused by those that have knowledge of their offences: and finally, being found guilty, by just judgment be deposed." You had forgotten the conclusion of the Article, perhaps?

WEST. Ahem! . . . No, Bishop, no. We lawyers are not in the habit of quoting a part of a passage without knowing the whole. But, I repeat, I fail to understand the ecclesiastical objection to Gallio, even from the ecclesiastic's own point of view. The ruling of the proconsul of Achaia has always seemed to me a very sound one, and his indifference to religion—if indeed that were predicated of him by the inspired penman, which in fact it is not—would, always assuming his subjection to the Divine guidance, have been immaterial.

WILB. There are such things as weak brethren, my lord. Your lordship's authority in matters of faith and ceremonial was a stumbling-block to many.

WEST. Yes; and many a bitter sectary, thirsting for the discomfiture of his opponents, was tripped up by it. The tables are turned now, Bishop, and it is

your own party, or the party with whom you are most in sympathy, who are on the defensive. It is against the Ritualists now, and not the Rationalists, that the hunt is up, and that burly huntsman, Sir William Harcourt, hallooing on the pack. Well would it be for them if a Gallio or two of my unworthy type could return to stand their friend.

WILB. I own I should prefer some of your lordship's contemporaries to yourself. But, alas! they cannot return "to teach the laws of death's untrodden realm."

WEST. No, or they would take back more jurisprudence than they brought with them. However, I ought not to say that of one of them; for of course I guess the men you have in your mind. No doubt you would rather send Lord Selborne back to earth than me. Or what say you to Lord Cairns?

WILB. Lord Cairns!

WEST. There is a significance in your lordship's intonation which I cannot affect to misunderstand. We will say no more of Lord Cairns. And he, after all—as, for that matter, his brother ex-Chancellor too—is but one member of the much-maligned court whose deliberation I used once, under Providence, to attempt to guide. Moreover, there were archiepiscopal assessors in Church cases whom you may wish back again. Archbishop Thomson of York——

WILB. Archbishop Thomson!

WEST. More accentual eloquence! Let us say no more, then, of Archbishop Thomson.

WILB. I dismiss him willingly. Of the two I should prefer Lord Cairns.

WEST. Your lordship's leaning towards the lay lawyer is as natural and blameless as mine towards the ecclesiastic. We know the purity of our preferences; yet there are those, Bishop, who would attribute them to professional jealousy.

WILB. You, however, are surely safe against any such imputation, and for myself, I can afford to despise it. There could be no room for envy in the case; and for obvious reasons.

WEST. Obvious indeed! For your lordship must mean, of course, that envy between prelates is theologically impossible. It was only by Divine permission that Dr. Thomson could ever have risen to the see of York; and when once your faith had surmounted the severe trial of believing that he could have been Divinely permitted to distance you in the race, you must have felt that it bordered on impiety to grudge him such a summons from on high. You may well say, therefore, that there were obvious reasons for not envying him.

WILB. The reasons which you mention, Lord Westbury, were not those to which I referred. There is a lamentable lack of reverence in your manner of handling holy things. The appointments of Archbishops are indeed, like all other earthly events, of Divine permission, but the inscrutable counsels of Providence may occasionally permit . . .

WEST. The appointment of the second-best candidate? .

WILB. Your interruption is hardly in keeping with your usual courtesy, and it attributes to me language which I have given you no warrant for putting into my mouth. But though I should be guilty of insincerity were I to pretend that I considered myself worthy of no higher preferment than fell to my lot, I repeat that I did not feel, and that I was incapable of feeling, any jealousy of those by whom, as you express it, I was distanced in the race.

WEST. You will do me the justice to remember, Bishop, that I entirely acquitted you of any such sentiment. My only offence appears to have been that I credited you with higher motives for your magnanimity than in your apostolic meekness you are willing to ascribe to yourself. I only wish that I could claim the same elevated sanction for my own humble exercise of the same virtue. But lawyers have never been enjoined to regard the success of a rival as a matter of Divine ordinance.

WILB. No, indeed; nor do I see that you, at least, require any such injunction to the practice of magnanimity. A lawyer who has held and has distinguished himself in the highest post in his profession might surely regard his successors in that office without feeling any temptation to envy.

WEST. Is it possible, Bishop, that you can imagine me in danger of envying a Lord Chancellor? I who

have known so many? I who have measured so many of those feet "whose length is equity"? Your lordship must be jesting.

WILB. You spoke just now of rivals.

WEST. Yes; rivals in the knowledge and interpretation of the law, competitors for precedence on the roll of English jurists. That, my dear Bishop, was the rivalry, and the only rivalry, to which I referred.

WILB. Distinction as a jurist, then, is not to be presumed from the fact of advancement to the highest place in the legal profession?

WEST. Pardon me, it is to be presumed: but presumptions of law, you know, are open to rebuttal by facts; and the presumption of a Chancellor's law has sometimes been rebutted by certain facts disclosed in his first judgment.

WILB. I cannot but think that you are here indulging your satirical temper to the point of exaggeration. Success in the legal profession may not stamp a man as a great jurist, but I think it may fairly be held to argue adequate capacity for the highest judicial office.

WEST. Your lordship has doubtless some reason for coupling professional success with advancement to the highest judicial office; but I cannot divine what it is. I was not aware that Chancellors either were or could be selected on professional grounds alone.

WILB. Not on those grounds alone, perhaps; but, if they are promoted mainly for political aptitude,

they have also to qualify themselves as lawyers for the preferment bestowed upon them.

• WEST. Qualify themselves! Exactly. An extremely happy phrase! It quite recalls old university days, does it not, Bishop? "Satisfecit nobis examinătoribus." The pushing advocate who goes in for high political honours is always, at least, compelled to produce a *testamur* in law. The class-man in the Cabinet is at any rate never less than a pass-man in the Court of Chancery. It is an admirable arrangement.

WILB. I think, however, with submission, that you somewhat overrate the difficulty experienced by others in performing tasks which to you were easy. Most Chancellors, after all, have acquitted themselves creditably as judges, and there is, perhaps, no great rashness in assuming that any man who has excelled his fellows in the exceedingly difficult art of politics must have brains to fill the Woolsack.

WEST. As epigrammatic as ever, I see, Bishop, even in the Shades. You are right. I have known no Chancellor, however inferior in capacity, whose brains were not perfectly well adapted to such a use. But have we not wandered somewhat far afield? I thought we were discussing Churchmen and not lawyers.

WILB. We were discussing both; and their respective qualifications as ecclesiastical judges.

WEST. Ah, true! I was analysing the composition



of the Judicial Committee and the extent to which it used to represent the interests of the Church? and you rejected the representative claims of the Archbishop of York. Well, if the prelates in that Court were too secularly-minded, you were able, as I have said, to redress the balance with clerical laymen. I have mentioned Lord Selborne already, and now let me remind you of the silver-tongued Lord Coleridge—a Chrysostom in the less precious metal. You found plenty of clericalism in him surely?

WILB. Yes, he was not as destitute of religious instincts as are some distinguished lawyers.

WEST. You are a master of ironical adjectives, Bishop; but I suppose I may take the first half of your sentence as serious. Lord Coleridge *had* the requisite amount of clericalism—how come by I know not; but I suppose he felt bound to take to it out of respect for his great-uncle's habit of stupefying himself with theology as a variation upon opium. However, there was Lord Coleridge—with his clericalism inherited or acquired. And now who else was there? Let me see. No; I can think of no others—Lord Coleridge, I imagine, exhausts the list.

WILB. He does, completely. You need not pursue your inquiries further. The race of eminent lawyers who are also sound Churchmen is becoming extinct. As for lawyers who, without attaining eminence in their profession, are yet winning their way, by the political road, to the final Court of Appeal in

ecclesiastical causes, what nowadays is to be expected from them? I shudder to think that some mere unforeseen accident of politics might have raised that—how shall I describe him?—that sturdy Erastian, Sir William Harcourt, to the woolsack?

WEST. Ah! I welcome the importation of that name into our colloquy.

WILB. Indeed! The name of Sir William Harcourt?

WEST. No; of Erastian. Do you know, Bishop, I have been called an Erastian myself?

WILB. You distress rather than surprise me. The world is very censorious.

WEST. I do not fear its censures, but I confess I like to comprehend them. Your lordship will recollect Dr. Johnson's famous triumph in the fish market. Obscurity may lend such a sting to vituperation, as not even the most callous can endure. I have smarted under "Erastian" like the Billingsgate lady under the contumely of "noun-substantive;" and have sought far more patiently for a definition. Am I right in believing that "Erastus" is simply the Græco-Latinised form of the name of Lieber, a German physician of the sixteenth century who opposed the Calvinistic system of ecclesiastical discipline?

WILB. Yes; your lordship may so far trust the theological encyclopædia which you have been evidently studying.

WEST. I thank you for the assurance, Bishop, and forgive you the sneer. If theologians would only consult lawyers in the lawyer's art as readily as we consult them in theirs, it would be better for them, and worse, professionally speaking, for us. But I confess a desire to economise the time consumed in such researches. Does your lordship think that in order to form correct ideas of the doctrine of Erastus, it would be absolutely necessary for me to study that series of Theses which he afterwards, I believe, collected into the treatise, "De Excommunicatione"?

WILB. No; I think you may spare yourself so distasteful a labour. In the modern political usage of the word, Erastianism need not take long to define. It is the name of a system which is at once a usurpation and a despotism, an encroachment of Cæsar upon the kingdom of Christ, and the imposition of a heavier tax upon His people than the hardest of the Cæsars ever levied from a conquered race. It is Tiberius exacting the tribute money, only with the souls of the faithful for denarii.

WEST. Thanks, Bishop. I admire the rhetorical fervour of your analysis. But I have noticed that the definitions of Churchmen are often as animated as lay invectives. Meanwhile, however, though I now know that my enemies did not mean to compliment me in calling me an Erastian, I am afraid I know little more.

WILB. Perhaps it would be simplest to define an Erastian as one who would degrade the Church into a "Department of the State"—one who holds the State to be not only the creator and arbiter of the temporal rights of the Church, but to have supreme authority over her as regards her spiritual functions also.

● WEST. Is *that* an Erastian, Bishop? "Par ma foi," as M. Jourdain says, "il y a plus de quarante ans que je dis de la prose sans que j'en susse rien." Why, my dear Bishop, that is simply the plain prose of the relations between Church and State as talked by ninety-nine Englishmen out of every hundred, "sans qu'ils en sussent rien." The man you meet in the omnibus has been an Erastian all his life without knowing it.

WILB. That is likely enough ; but it is lamentable to find such ignorance in high places.

WEST. Enlighten it then, Bishop. Explain these things to the benighted master of Israel who sat so long on the judgment-seat, the victim, in a double sense, of judicial blindness. Delineate, I beg of you, this sharp boundary between the temporal rights and spiritual functions of the Church—this landmark which it is Erastianism to overstep. Is its recognition traceable in the suit instituted by one of your lordship's right reverend brethren against a certain Essayist and Reviewer, and carried on appeal to the Court of which I was an unworthy member? Was

there no Erastianism in the conduct of a bishop who asked us to examine the defendant's doctrines for heresy, and to deprive him of his benefice as a heretic? Or was the only Erastianism ours for deciding against the episcopal promoter, and, as profane jesters described it, dismissing his formidable client "with costs"?

WILB. The tone of your questions is hardly seemly, Lord Westbury, but I will answer them. It is, doubtless, the function of the State to affirm, through its judges, the doctrines of the Church; but it is for the Church herself to define them.

WEST. Where and when has she done so independently of the State? In which of the transactions or documents of the Reformation was any such claim allowed? Did the policy of Henry VIII. or of Elizabeth recognise it? Do even the Articles themselves assert it?

WILB. Unquestionably. "The Church," says the Twentieth Article, "hath power to decree rites or ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith."

WEST. Where, then, does this authority reside? In Convocation? Take care, Bishop. It was once my painful duty to rebuke you for an attempted encroachment on the ecclesiastical authority of the Crown; and I am not clear, as a lawyer, that, even *here*, it might not be possible for you to expose yourself to the penalties of a *premunire*.

WILB. I wonder, I must say, at your lordship's

recalling the memory of an altercation in which I was generally held to have had the best of it.

WEST. It would ill become me, Bishop, to dispute your account of the matter. You undoubtedly had the last word, and that is an advantage which even the House of Lords was able to appreciate.

WILB. Surely, Lord Westbury, my reply was more warmly applauded than your attack.

WEST. A reply generally is, unless the speaker is too angry to be articulate; but the reply of an indignant Bishop would, I make bold to say, receive encouragement from any assembly in the world. You must surely have noticed—at least if such scenes are ever witnessed by episcopal eyes—you must surely have noticed how the sympathies of the spectators gather round the lady-combatant in a street encounter between husband and wife. A Bishop at blows with a temporal peer, and still more with a lawyer, makes much the same appeal to the sentiments of the bystanders.

WILB. I would rather not discuss our quarrel further. Enough that I was satisfied with the part I played in it. Let us return to the point we were discussing when you revived the recollection of this ancient conflict. It is for the Church, I say, to define her doctrines, though it may be for the State to affirm them through its judges.

WEST. The distinction, Bishop, is too subtle for my blunt wits.

WILB. Then death, Lord Westbury, must have dulled instead of brightening your intellectual part. For I had no difficulty in explaining the distinction to you on earth.

WEST. Doubtless, then, it was too unsubstantial to fix itself in my memory.

WILB. Not at all. You objected on various grounds to the plan of judicial reform in which I had embodied it, but you never denied that I had effected a true separation of functions between the Church and State, in the determination of ecclesiastical cases.

WEST. A judge, Bishop, must not be taken to affirm everything which he does not deny. My objections were probably confined to the various grounds which you mention, because those grounds sufficed to dispose of your scheme. But pray let me hear it once more. I am quite willing to sit in error upon myself.

WILB. What I proposed was the establishment of a Court of Episcopal referees, not in substitution for, but in addition to, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council; and that whenever a question of Divine law was involved in any ecclesiastical proceeding, this Court should be asked—not, How is the Church to decide? but—What is the doctrine of the Church of England on this question? The *fact* of the answer would satisfy the Church that her doctrines remained intact under the legal decision,

however heterodox the principles of that decision might be. Thus, for instance (I am quoting from recollection a letter which I once wrote to your lordship), thus, for instance, "in the Gorham case the lawyers would still, it may be, have decided that Mr. Gorham's book did not so categorically contradict the articles and formularies as to subject him to deprivation. But with this would have gone out the ecclesiastical answer that the Church of England taught that every rightly baptised infant was regenerate, and this would have saved us from the 'great schism under which we have ever since languished.'"

WEST. Proceed, Bishop. I am all attention.

WILB. Proceed? I have nothing to add. My scheme is before you.

WEST. Indeed? Then I certainly recognise nothing which I could ever have——

WILB. I did not say you approved it.

WEST. Your lordship has not anticipated the concluding word of my sentence. I was not going to say "approved" but "understood." The statement you have just made reveals to me no project which I can either understand at this moment, or can believe myself to have at any time comprehended. •

WILB. This is mere perversity. I claim, at any rate, to have demonstrated the practical soundness of my theories. Having laid down the principle that it is for the Church to define her own doctrines, though it is for the State to affirm them through its



judges, I have proceeded to formulate<sup>a</sup> a plan, in which the doctrinal authority of the Church is at once rendered independent of, and prevented from encroaching upon, the judicial authority of the State. . . . You are silent. Can you deny that I have done this?

WEST. What an interesting passage in ecclesiastical history, Bishop, is the Jansenist controversy! And how singularly does this proposal of yours recall it!

WILB. Only, I suspect, to so learned a theologian as yourself. To my own superficial acquaintance with that controversy it suggests no parallel. Will you again give me the benefit of your erudition?

WEST. I seem destined to be your instructor, Bishop, or your butt. I am glad, however, to be of service to you in either capacity. Your proposal, then, recalls the attempt of the Jansenists to evade the censure of Innocent X. The Pope, they declared, was infallible only in matter of doctrine, and liable to human error in matter of fact. The distinction between the *droit* and the *fait* appears to have struck your lordship as the key to the problem of ecclesiastical discipline; and you accordingly propose to divide jurisdiction between the Bishops and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council on a similar principle. The Bishops are to lay down the law of the Church, and the Judicial Committee are to decide whether the teaching of an incriminated clerk conforms to or departs from it.

WILB. I did not say "the law of the Church." On the contrary, I carefully refrained from using the expression. I said the Bishops were to declare "the doctrine of the Church."

WEST. Which differs from its law in what respect? . . . Your lordship hesitates. May I ask whether the Judicial Committee is to be *bound*, under the terms of your scheme, to take the doctrine of the Church to be in every case what the Bishops declare it to be, and, waiving any doubts of their own as to whether it accords with the true interpretation of the articles and formularies, to confine themselves to considering whether the language of an alleged heretic can or cannot be made to square with it? If so, I should be glad, Bishop, of your assistance in distinguishing the doctrine of the Church from the "law of the Church," the Episcopal referees from a bench of judges, and the Privy Council from a jury-panel. And I should then invite you to explain to me how your scheme can be said not to encroach upon the judicial functions of the existing Court, when you would completely deprive them of all juridical attributions, and simply call upon them to find "Ay" or "No" upon a naked issue of fact.

WILB. I was unwilling to interrupt the flow of your exposition, but I will now observe that none of these searching interrogatories can be rightly addressed to me. They are all founded on the assumption—which you did not wait for me to accept—that the Judicial

Committee of the Privy Council would be *bound* to take their law from the Bishops, or rather bound to treat as law what the Bishops lay down as doctrine ; and that is an assumption to which my language gave no warrant.

WEST. What, Bishop ! You would give your tribunal of doctrine a merely consultative voice ? You would permit the lay judges to adopt or reject its opinions as they pleased ?

WILB. I have already said that my object is to obtain an authoritative declaration of the true faith of the Church, and this would, under my scheme, be obtained independently of the decision of the Privy Council on the particular case before them. To recur to the instance I cited just now, the Judicial Committee might have decided that Mr. Gorham's book did not so categorically contradict the articles and formularies as to subject him to deprivation, but with this would have gone out the ecclesiastical answer that the Church of England taught that every rightly baptised infant was regenerate. Do you see any anomaly or inconvenience in that ?

WEST. No, Bishop, I do not. Artfully concealed as it is under an assumption which you profess to repudiate, it is invisible. You reduce the Judicial Committee to mere judges of fact, and then you rejoice at finding that no anomaly attends the reservation of the question of law to the Episcopal referees. But on that hypothesis, the Privy Council would not

have exercised the power you pretend to allow them of rejecting the Episcopal statement of doctrine. They would simply have acquitted the defendant of the charge of having contravened it. But if the Judicial Committee are to have the right of declaring the law as well as finding the fact, we must conceive it competent to them to have declared in the case supposed that "children are *not* made regenerate by baptism," and consequently that it was immaterial whether Mr. Gorham had contravened the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration or not. Suppose them to have so laid down the "law of the Church:" would that become "the doctrine of the Church," in the teeth of the declaration of your Episcopal referees?

WILB. God forbid!

WEST. Ay, but He must forbid something more if scandal is to be averted. He must forbid the Privy Council to maintain a declared heretic in possession of his benefice. Surely, Bishop, you must perceive your invisible anomaly and inconvenience now. A and B, two beneficed clergymen, are simultaneously prosecuted for heresy, upon two different points of doctrine. The Church, through its Bishops, declares her true doctrine to have been upheld in the teaching of A, and controverted in that of B. The Privy Council, however, being of the opposite opinion on both points, deprives A for his orthodoxy, and confirms B in his benefice for his heresy. And that is to bring peace to a distracted Church! No, Bishop, there is one homely

lesson which we poor Erastians have mastered, but which the most erudite of Bishops has never yet contrived to grasp. It is that, if two men ride a-horseback, one must ride behind. You cannot divide the spiritual jurisdiction from the temporal authority of an ecclesiastical court. They must remain in the same hands, whether those be the hands of the Church or of the State. The days are past when the ecclesiastical tribunal could find a heretic guilty by its sole adjudication, and then hand him over for punishment to the secular arm. Nowadays, if the State is to be executioner, it must also be judge.

WILB. What! Is the rule of the laity, then, to be absolute? Are we, the representatives of the spiritual element in our communion, to hold our peace altogether on matters concerning the most solemn verities of our faith?

WEST. Why not? It would be a wholesome discipline for week-days. Besides, there is nothing to prevent you talking as much as you like in Convocation; though whether that is your notion of clear and unanimous utterance, I know not. Nor do I know whether any such is to be found among you.

• WILB. I told you at the outset, Lord Westbury, that it would be useless for me to discuss the question with you. We Churchmen, at any rate, recognise a "living voice of the Church."

WEST. And we laymen, Bishop, can distinguish at least half a dozen. There were nearly as many at

the Reformation, and they had all to be listened to. The Church itself is founded on the policy of comprehension, and that is a policy which only laymen can administer.

WILB. Comprehension may be carried too far by those who care not whom they include.

WEST. Any distance, Bishop, will seem too far to those who think that the hurdles are being opened at the wrong end of the fold. And "those who care not whom they include" means simply men who show no preference for either end of the fold to the other: a class much more common, and, it may be, much more properly so, among the laity than among the clergy.

WILB. Nay, enlarge the fold at the latitudinarian end as much as you please, I say, as a High Churchman: only let it remain a *fold*—a real inclosure and not a sham one, opening wide over its prostrate hurdles on to the bleak moorland of infidelity.

WEST. And enlarge the fold at the High Church end as much as you please, say I as a latitudinarian: only let it remain a *sheep* fold, not one whose hospitable gaps invite everywhere the entrance of the Roman wolf. But metaphorical controversy, my dear Bishop, is an idle game of battledore. The argument is as easily bandied to and fro as a shuttlecock, and has not much more weight. Shall we discontinue it?

WILB. As you seem from your choice of metaphor to charge me with Romanizing, most certainly. No

man has denounced the errors and pretensions of Rome more unreservedly than I have.

WEST. And yet, after all, it is the very type of Church government which you most favour.

WILB. Most favour? I?

WEST. To be sure. A Pope who claims to be the vicar of Christ is——

WILB. Popes hardly bear themselves as His vicars nowadays.

WEST. Pardon me. That is exactly how they do bear themselves, it seems to me. A modern Pope behaves as Christ's vicar in the sense in which we speak of an English incumbent as being the vicar of his curate.

WILB. The wholesome purpose of that last sarcasm will, I trust, procure forgiveness for its irreverence.

WEST. I trust so too. Elijah, you will remember, was permitted the use of irony in testifying against the prophets of Baal. But what, to return to our subject, could afford a more perfect type of spiritual independence than the Church of Rome? There you have a "living voice of the Church" indeed.

WILB. A living voice, but not "of the Church." Hers was hushed for ever in 1869; and nothing now is audible through the silence of that vast communion but the voice of a single bishop.

WEST. There is much to admire in your lordship's disinterested rejection of so attractive an ideal. And

yet I have known English prelates who seemed continually striving to realise it.

WILB. The voice of the Church will in future mean the deliverances, ill or well considered, of a solitary Italian Priest.

WEST. So much the better, surely, if the Church has agreed to recognise his voice as hers. The solo has natural advantages over the chorus, if only that it leaves less doubt about the tune.

WILB. I cannot reply to ribaldry, Lord Westbury. Let it be enough to say that whatever be its merits, the form of spiritual government which prevails in the Church of Rome is by no means to the taste—speaking for myself, at any rate—of English Bishops.

WEST. Oh, as for the Bishops themselves, I can well understand that. I thought we were speaking of the discipline of the Church at large. Really to relish a Papacy from the point of view of the ruling ecclesiastical class, one ought to be Pope one's self. What your lordship would doubtless prefer to a spiritual autocracy of that kind would be a sort of right reverend Venetian oligarchy.

WILB. I am certainly of opinion that doctrines should be defined not by a single head, but by "the heads" of the Church, after full synodical deliberation.

WEST. Impossible. The heads would be by the ears in no time. This sort of episcopal Home Rule that you seem so much to long for, Bishop, would be found as unworkable in the ecclesiastical as in the



political order, and would lead to just the same disagreeable alternative between resumption of the grant and the total separation of grantor and grantee. And you do not really desire a "Repeal of the Union" between Church and State, I am sure. You are loyal, I am persuaded, to the Establishment which you so conspicuously adorned.

WILB. There, in truth, you do me no more than justice. How, indeed, could I be otherwise than loyal to the Church of Hooker and Andrewes, of Ken and Herbert—the Church which has enlisted the fervent devotion of so many saintly hearts, the reasonable service of so many powerful minds; the one Church of Christendom which has steered successfully the middle course between the despotism of authority and the anarchy of private judgment?

WEST. I must admit that it is pre-eminently the Church of a gentleman, and a man of culture. But I feel sure that it would almost wholly lose its attractions in this respect and become narrow and sectarian if once it were separated from the State. Its Bishops, too, would probably decline in social status, and by consequence in their acceptability to the world of fashion.

WILB. Why do you address that argument so pointedly to me?

WEST. I must apologise for addressing an argument of so worldly a nature to your lordship at all; but you cannot, I know, be insensible to the

consideration that high social popularity must greatly enlarge a Bishop's sphere of usefulness, and that there is nothing unworthy of his Apostolic mission in courting it.

WILB. I know not, Lord Westbury, whether you say that in good faith or in irony ; but, in any case, I hold it to be true.

WEST. Irony, Bishop ! Never, I trust, shall I use that weapon so unskilfully, and I may add so profanely, as to blunt its edge against the informations of Holy Writ.

WILB. St. Paul was made all things to all men, that he might by all means save some.

WEST. Your lordship has anticipated my quotation. Social success is in this sense a proof of Apostolic succession, and was doubtless sought by you only for such evidential purpose. But be that as it may, the Pauline descent of your lordship's versatility was unmistakable, and it must indeed have been gratifying to you to reflect that the display of those accomplishments which so charmed our dinner-tables was indirectly tending to establish the validity of Anglican orders.

### III

## PARNELL AND BUTT

BUTT. What! his Uncrowned Majesty among us! And so soon! Surely, sir, your conquest of England cannot have been already achieved?

PAR. Who is it? The light is dim here, and my eyes are not yet accustomed to it. . . . Ha! Mr. Butt.

BUTT. I am flattered. You have the royal memory for faces; and a generosity more than royal. To recognise rulers whom they have supplanted is the last magnanimity of kings.

PAR. You were supplanted, sir, by a foot more powerful than mine.

BUTT. Really! How deceptive are appearances! I should have said that if any man was ever tripped by another, it was I by you. "Political necessity," no doubt. "Irresistible national movement," of course. "Popular forces beyond control;" oh, I know the jargon well; I have the whole of it at my fingers' ends. But need we trouble ourselves with it here? The wrestler who gets his toe behind his

adversary's heel, and with one well-timed jerk, cants him over upon the green, is, I suppose, an instrument of Fate. But it is a truth ill suited to the meditation of the athlete on the broad of his back ; and, I own, I have found it as little consolatory.

PAR. My object, Mr. Butt, was not to console, but to explain. I could never have overthrown you had you not been the man you were, or had the times been other. Nor did I go out of my way to overthrow you at all.

BUTT. Out of your way? No. I never said so. I was in your path, and your way lay over my body.

PAR. Say rather, sir, that you were an obstacle in the path of advancing Ireland, and that I, as the chosen of the Irish people, swept you aside.

BUTT. No doubt I should have put it so. The patriot who trips his rival is always the "chosen," and the other is "the obstacle." . . . How is Mr. Timothy Healy?

PAR. You think that a relevant question?

BUTT. Relevant to what? I do not understand you.

PAR. You cannot have mistaken me. Come, Mr. Butt, this is unworthy of you and of our common abode. I thought we had left malice behind us, with the other vile passions and viler creatures of the earth. Deal plainly with me. How much do you know?

BUTT. Mr. Parnell, I know nothing save that you were bound to the liberation of Ireland, and—that you are here.

PAR. And you guess that I have not accomplished my work? Well, you guess rightly. But what has that to do with the man whose name you mentioned?

BUTT. I conjectured that you had fallen, and I knew that you had been the patron, the benefactor, the maker of Mr. Healy. I thought, therefore, that if any foot had tripped you, it might well be——

PAR. Foot! he has no feet. His breed has had none since an earlier and a greater Fall. You may stumble over them, but you would hardly say that they “trip” you. Nor, to do them justice, are they ever, in Ireland, at any rate, found crawling openly across any one’s path; or they would not have escaped St. Patrick. So long as you keep your footing, they will keep the hedge. You do not feel their fang till you are prostrate.

BUTT. You speak in riddles, Mr. Parnell.

PAR. The answer would take long to give you, if you know none of it already. Tell me, what have you heard?

BUTT. Of late, nothing. But before that, enough to make me wonder at beholding you here. They told me that you had gained absolute control over an English party, and their leader.

PAR. They told you truly. I held them in the hollow of my hand.

BUTT. Then you should have closed it on them. Why, *I* could have done that—I, the despised patron of obsolete parliamentary methods. Fortune never favoured *me* with the command of a majority in the House of Commons.

PAR. Nor did she so favour me. I wrung it from her by years\* of patient scheming and unwearied endeavour. In the teeth of hatred and calumny, at the cost of ease and happiness, under penalty of banishment from the order to which I was born, and of condemnation to the society of ruffians whom I despised, in peril of my liberty from the Government, ay, and even of my life from the desperadoes at my back—I won it! The half-dozen rebels who defied your declining authority in '76, became at the next election the thirty members of a fully recognised, Irish parliamentary party, and grew at the election after that, into the eighty-six "constitutional spokesmen of the legitimate demands of Ireland." The detested obstructionist, the incendiary agitator of '81, became the "patriot statesman" of '85; and, thanks to the blunders of his enemies, the "deeply-injured victim of cruel slander" in '89. I was the same man that I had always been, pursuing the ends which Mr. Gladstone had described for me, by the methods which he had imputed to me. I was "marching" then, as always, "through rapine and plunder to the disintegration of the Empire." But I held the balance of Parliamentary power in my hand! I

could make and unmake Ministries! I could banish party leaders to Opposition and recall them again to office! And so, in a moment, at a single turn of the wheel, at a single spin of the penny, without one act of atonement, without one word of submission, I stepped from the pillory into the triumphal car! The men who had pelted me with the rotten eggs of their abuse, strewed the flowers of their flattery in my path; the aged demagogue who had denounced and imprisoned me, followed humbly in my train! . . . Mr. Butt—you who have always believed in and respected this people—you know how I have always hated them. Can you wonder now that I despise them too?

BUTT. I can hardly help wondering that you should tell me so. Their meanness reduces the value of your conquest. But proceed. Have you wreaked your scorn and hatred on these time-servers? Have you trampled them under foot?

PAR. Spare me your irony. You know as well as I that Death has been too quick for me.

BUTT. Too quick? Let us understand each other, Mr. Parnell. I had supposed it to be some years since this Triumph of yours set out, with your flower-strewing flatterers in front, and that bound and humbled old commander behind your car. How comes it to have been so long upon the road to the Capitol? Can anything have happened to it? Is it possible that——?

PAR. There! there! enough. Your sarcasms show me plainly enough that you know more—or at least that you have guessed more—than you would have had me suppose. You are not ignorant, I see, that the victory has been postponed.

BUTT. What! till after the Triumph? That seems strange. The erection of the trophy interrupted by a defeat?

PAR. You are mistaken. I reject the word. I was not—I have never been, defeated. I am no more defeated now than is the general who is laid low by a lightning stroke, ere he has had time to close and conquer.

BUTT. It is the question of dates that puzzles me. Only a very timid or a very indolent general would have allowed accident so long to work in—would have left so many years open for the despatch of a thunderbolt. It was wantonly tempting Jupiter; that is if you were really not defeated. But come, you may be candid with me, especially since, as you say, I have already guessed the truth. You sustained a—how shall we call it?—a check. In spite of your obedient English Parliamentary majority, you failed to carry the stronghold of the Union at the first assault. Was it not so?

PAR. It was. Our Bill was lost by a majority of thirty.

BUTT. No more? Has there been a mortality among the Tory peers?



PAR. In a house of over six hundred and fifty.

BUTT. No less? Has the whole peerage taken to attending the debates? But no; that is incredible. Yet, on the other hand, you cannot surely be speaking of the House of Commons—the home of your obedient majority? Was it *they* who threw out the Bill?

PAR. You would call a pack of hounds obedient, I suppose, even though some four or five couples should run wild. And it was little more than that proportion of the Liberals who refused to answer to the whip. I may fairly enough exult, I think, over the docility of the remainder. Two hundred and twenty-four English politicians turning their two hundred and twenty-four coats at the bidding of a two hundred and twenty-fifth; eighty per cent. of a great English party recanting the principles they had professed, and repudiating the policy they had supported, for years! Is *that* not victory enough to satisfy an Irish leader?

BUTT. If vanity is his only appetite, yes. But there should be something more solid than that to stay the stomach of his patriotism. And what else was there? So far as I understand you, nothing. You did not even capture, or you could not keep, your Home Rule majority in Parliament. And the English constituencies, I conclude, would have none of you.

PAR. They were badly handled. They were

alarmed and mystified, and driven to the ballot-boxes before they had had time to recover. The whole business was execrably bungled; but what then? The bungling was none of mine. After all, I was not Prime Minister, to decide when a dissolution should be taken, and how the stupid English electorate might be best approached. If their own prophet and oracle—if the man who had been for twenty years befooling them mistook the way to their slow wits, it was no fault of his Irish partners in the game.

BUTT. No; but the fault, by whomsoever made, may be irremediable. What assurance have you that the verdict once pronounced against you will ever be reversed?

PAR. What assurance have I? . . . And this man supposed himself capable of winning Home Rule by Parliamentary methods! A man with so intimate and accurate a knowledge of the English democracy!

BUTT. I did not catch what you said, sir.

PAR. Mr. Butt, it was not necessary—I will go so far as to say it was not desirable—that you should. You were asking me what assurance I had that the verdict of the English constituencies against Home Rule would ever be reversed. Let me ask you what assurance you have that the barb of a weathercock will ever change places with its feather? There is no reason why it should, unless the wind changes. And there is no reason that we know of why the

wind should change, except that it always does ; which assures us that it always will. My assurance, sir, that the English electors would reverse their verdict against Home Rule was mainly of that description. But there were other grounds for it in plenty. Upon one in particular I was relying with confidence the most complete. Nothing but death—not my own, but another's—could have arrested the operation of *that* cause.

BUTT. Which was——?

PAR. You have not forgotten the characteristics of Mr. Gladstone?

BUTT. Surely not. I had many opportunities of studying them. My intercourse with him was always of a pleasant kind, and he was, on more than one occasion, good enough to express high approval of the speech with which I introduced my annual motion.

PAR. Your annual . . . ? You will forgive me, I am sure, Mr. Butt, but I have entirely forgotten its purport.

BUTT. No doubt. Events have travelled fast of late. It was my habit every year to move for the appointment of a Select Committee "To inquire into and report upon the nature, extent, and grounds of the demand made by a large proportion of the Irish people for the restoration to Ireland of an Irish Parliament, with power to control the internal affairs of that country."

PAR. Ah, so strong as that? Mr. Gladstone must,

indeed, have been magnanimous to bestow his praise upon a speech delivered in support of so formidable a motion.

BUTT. He voted against it, however.

PAR. I know. He would. It is to his credit, nevertheless, that he was not too much alarmed by it to do justice to your eloquence. If the Fates had spared you, Mr. Butt, to go on moving it for another twenty years, he would have met it, I am persuaded, with the same intrepidity, and his praises of the mover would have been equally disinterested. But did your intercourse with him reveal no other trait in his character except the singular magnanimity which he thus illustrated?

BUTT. He was doubtless fond of power.

PAR. Doubtless he was. And should you say or not, that if power were torn from his grasp, he would resent it as a personal affront?

BUTT. Perhaps.

PAR. I will go further than your "perhaps." I say that he would regard it as an injury never to be forgotten or forgiven until he had forced atonement from those who had inflicted it. I say that he would take his defeat to bed with him at night and rise with it in the morning; that it would sit with him at his table and companion him in his walks; and that if only life and health remained to him, he would never rest until he had not merely recovered the power which he had lost, but had

compelled his countrymen to restore it to him on the very grounds on which they had wrested it from him, and for the very purposes which they had striven to foil. And now, sir, you know my second ground of assurance that the defeat of 1886 would be retrieved. I had not only myself to rely on, but Mr. Gladstone; not only my own inflexible determination, but his implacable pride. C

BUTT. And yet you come among us a disappointed man! Your narrative, Mr. Parnell, does not grow more intelligible as it proceeds. For you do not say that it was death only that came between you and your final victory.

PAR. No; you are right. I do not say that.

BUTT. Yet what else was there, in Heaven's name? You say, and you should know, that your own determination was inflexible. You tell me, and you may well be right, that Mr. Gladstone's pride was implacable, and that nothing would satisfy him but to avenge its injuries and to reverse the judgment which inflicted them. You declare, and I am not concerned to deny it, that you had yet another ally in the levity and inconstancy of the English electorate. Yet, fair as was the prospect which you had thus before you, it was overclouded before you quitted the world. Is it not so?

PAR. I left it at its darkest; or, at least, I left it darker than it had ever been since Mr. Gladstone's surrender.

BUTT. Ha! that is strange indeed. By what extraordinary mischance came that about?

PAR. I was unlucky enough to give occasion to my political enemies and my false political friends by a matter of private scandal——

BUTT. Of private scandal! *You* to give them such occasion!

● PAR. Come, Mr. Butt, I might as well say, “*You* to be surprised at that!” No one should know better than yourself that an Irish leader may suffer that misfortune. ●

BUTT. You might have spared me the reminder. My surprise was merely a compliment to your reputation for business habits, and to the sound condition of your financial affairs. You, so far as I know, were never in difficulties. I was never out of them. You had not my excuse for mixing in transactions that Parliament had to call in question, and for confounding the legislator with the lawyer in the matter of fees. However, let us hear—who was the other party in your case? Another Indian Prince?

PAR. You mistake the nature of the incident altogether. It had nothing to do with money. ●

BUTT. No? Then where did the scandal come in?

PAR. I was made co-respondent to a petition for divorce, and a decree was pronounced against me.

BUTT. That was unpleasant. Well, what followed?

PAR. What followed? Why, what should follow? That was the private scandal I spoke of. .

BUTT. Yes; I see the private scandal plain enough. What I do not see is its public interest—"the occasion" which, you say, it gave to your political enemies and false political friends. How, in the name of confusion, did they manage to hook the affair into politics at all?

PAR. Did you ever hear, Mr. Butt, of the "Non-conformist conscience"?

BUTT. To be sure; I remember it well. It used to object to Church-rates; but they have been abolished.

PAR. Yes; but the conscience remains, and has found out other things to object to—my leadership amongst them. It declared that it found it impossible to co-operate for the attainment of Home Rule with a man who had been guilty of a breach of the Seventh Commandment.

BUTT. Strange! Yet the Dissenters have been Liberals for generations, and have gone quite steadily under leaders with whom—well, with whom the Seventh Commandment had to take its chance with the others. Indeed, they have been more restive in the hands of Mr. Gladstone than of anybody.

PAR. They were so—or so he pretends—in the present case. He yielded wholly—or that was his account of the matter—to their overwhelming moral pressure.

BUTT. What! and to their exquisite reasons also? Your whole story, Mr. Parnell, is to me so incredible, that you must forgive my suspecting you of having formed an entirely wrong impression of the affair. No man would be more likely to do so than one as deeply concerned in it as yourself. Pray, let me have the whole series of events in strict chronological order. What occurred immediately after the pronouncement of the decree?

PAR. Nothing.

BUTT. You mean——

PAR. I mean nothing to indicate that it would have, or even that it ought to have, any political consequences whatever. There was a week to pass before Parliament met. During that week not a word fell in speech or writing from Mr. Gladstone, or from any political personage of the slightest importance. My party held a meeting in Dublin, and they unanimously resolved to ignore the incident, and to continue to me their confidence. So little did any of them foresee a future interest in betraying me, that they had made no arrangements for desertion; but, on the contrary, by the servility of their homage, threw difficulties in its way. The chance of treachery which was about to offer itself would have taken even the readiest of traitors unawares.

BUTT. The Irish race is surely not losing its finer political instincts. What could have been the opportunity which so escaped their traditional foresight?



PAR. You shall hear. A few days after these enthusiastic proceedings in Dublin, Parliament met; and, on the first night of the session, my followers unanimously re-elected me leader. The next morning there appeared a letter from Mr. Gladstone in the London newspapers, proclaiming to all the world that I had become impossible as an ally, that my continuance at the head of the Nationalist party would reduce his own leadership "almost to a nullity"—you know his turn of phrase—and that he could no longer hope to carry his political adherents with him in the struggle for Irish Independence unless my own followers and my countrymen would consent to cast me off.

BUTT. What! He proclaimed that to the whole world in the London newspapers, and without any previous communication—without even any attempt to communicate—with you?

PAR. Without an attempt? Oh no; he was far too considerate for that. He gave a message to one of his lieutenants, who gave it to one of my lieutenants, and as there was no answer from me within the next few hours—well, he wrote and despatched his letter to the newspapers. So prompt was the obedience which had to be rendered to the demands of the Nonconformist conscience.

BUTT. And you are content with that explanation of his precipitancy? Mr. Parnell, I credited you with more than your real share of acumen.

PAR. Say rather with less than my actual taste for irony. Do not deceive yourself, sir. I had not contended with that venerable manceuvrer for a dozen years without knowing him at least as well as you do. And in this case his precipitancy was just as intelligible to me as his delay. If he held his hand for a week, it was not from disinclination to strike, but from fear lest he should strike too soon. If the blow fell abruptly at last, it was not because he was forced, but because he was eager, to deliver it. He wanted, and he waited for, an out-door agitation as an excuse for striking at all; but when the Pharisees among his followers had provided him with that, he seized upon it with all the hurry of hate and fear.

BUTT. You must know better than I what his motives were, but even I can see that they must have been self-supplied, and that the theory of "irresistible pressure from without" is inadequate.

PAR. Inadequate, indeed! Why, for years past he had been the keeper of the conscience that he then pretended to be obeying. Irresistible pressure, forsooth! What pressure from followers or from colleagues did he ever find irresistible—he who had paralysed their judgments, and swayed their wills, and defied their scruples for half a lifetime; he who had compelled landlords to assist in confiscating rents, and lawyers to evade Acts of Parliament, and Quakers to bombard towns? No! the pretext is too transparent. He welcomed the clamours to which he affected to yield

with reluctance, and caught greedily at the opportunity of shaking off a confederate whom he knew that he could neither coerce nor cajole.

BUTT. And you think that he so regarded you?

PAR. I know it. And but a few months before he had made tacit admission that what he could not accomplish he would nevertheless be bound to attempt. At an interview under his own roof he had sounded me, after his own fashion, with a view to ascertaining how far he could outwit, and how far intimidate me; and I left him well persuaded in my own mind that neither experiment had satisfied him. We had looked into each other's eyes like two wrestlers about to close, and he knew what to expect when the struggle came. What wonder that he should have sought to escape that struggle by a stratagem, and to provide himself with an easier antagonist? You talked but now of tripping, Mr. Butt. If I have been tripped by any one, it is by him.

BUTT. Yet surely it was in no man's power to do that unassisted. The decision rested, after all, with your party and your countrymen. I need not ask you what was the verdict of the former; I have led an Irish party myself. How many of them—let me take the simpler statistics first—how many of them remained true to you?

PAR. Between twenty and thirty.

BUTT. Ah! more than a fourth! I congratulate

you. It was always said that you had infused a new spirit into Irish politics, and if nearly thirty per cent. of your followers were able to resist the influence of an English Government, you have nobly justified the boast. With these at your side and the Irish people, of course, behind you, you would have made head, I doubt not, against your enemies if your life had been spared. The Fates have dealt more cruelly with you than I thought. They must have snatched victory from your very grasp. This Parliament, I gather, had well-nigh run its course, and ere many months had passed, an indignant Ireland would have purged your party of its traitors, and you would once more have brought the English hypocrites and their leader to your feet. . . . You are silent. Surely I have read the situation aright?

PAR. The Irish people have been deceived.

BUTT. Deceived! Deceived! You cannot mean that——

PAR. For a moment they hesitated to rally round me.

BUTT. For a moment! Ay, like enough. Or for an hour, a day, a week. That would be no more than pardonable. The shock was sudden, the position novel. The blow was staggering, and it had been delivered by one in whom their own leader had lately taught them to believe. But did they waver for a moment after they heard the sound of your voice? . . . You do not answer. Did they refuse to listen

to you? Or, can it be—but no! that is impossible—that you shrank from the conflict?

PAR. I? I flung back the old man's challenge in his face. I answered repudiation with defiance, and revealed to all the world the plot which had been hatched against me. I told my countrymen the whole truth of the negotiations with Mr. Gladstone, and showed them that he only sought to rid himself of me that he might have them at his mercy.

BUTT. And you took that course without hesitation?

PAR. Ay, and pursued it without rest. Sir, between the morning when I began this battle to the night when I quitted the field for ever, there ran three hundred and fourteen days. My nights I reckon fewer, for I have had to travel much; but of all those days there has not been one, nay, not a waking hour of one, which I have not given to my enemies and to my revenge. I have faced them everywhere, and with every weapon—in the conference-room, in the newspaper-office, in the market-place, at the polling-booth. I passed six days of every week in planning their overthrow, and the seventh in denouncing them to my countrymen. I crossed and recrossed the Irish Sea a score of times, and covered hundreds of miles in journeyings by land. What? You imagine that it was fear, or doubt, or sloth, that gave them the advantage! I know not the meaning of the words. Fear! It was

the white-livered deserters themselves who cowered before me! Doubt! I never doubted for one instant that, at last, I should drive the rats to their holes. Sloth! I never rested; and I never would have rested till I had done it!

BUTT. Compose yourself, sir. I have imputed to you none of the weaknesses you disclaim. But had they existed, they would have, at least, been explanations of what now remains unintelligible. If you neither shrank from your enemies, nor doubted your victory, nor remitted your efforts, how came you to be defeated?

PAR. Must I again tell you that I was not defeated—that my ultimate triumph was assured—that when Death cut short my struggle I had suffered nothing but a temporary check, a reverse which——

BUTT. Which has still to be explained. You were the idol of the Irish people, their king, their hero, the object of their enthusiastic homage. They had followed you for years with blind and unquestioning devotion, with that romantic loyalty which nations indeed can feel, but which has never existed unalloyed with baser sentiments in the purest political party that ever took, or broke, an oath. The Irish people had no jealousies to gratify, no rivalries to further, no private ends to serve. They would have laughed, I know, at the outcry which English Puritans had raised, and English intriguers re-echoed, against you; and they could not have failed to notice that,

until Mr. Gladstone declared himself, your followers had laughed at it themselves. Yet this people, so devoted to you, so hostile to your enemies, so sensible of the services you had rendered them, so eager for the benefits you had promised them, so conscious of the wisdom of obeying you, so contemptuous of the pretext for displacing you—this people it is who, at a word from an English statesman to whom they owe nothing but what you have wrung from him,—have cast you off! It is incredible.

PAR. Incredible it would indeed be were that all there is to tell. But it was not, as you have said, “at a word” from Mr. Gladstone that I was abandoned. It was from a voice much nearer to their ears.

BUTT. The landlord’s?

PAR. The priest’s.

BUTT. Aha! The secret out at last! I wonder no more. If you have quarrelled with the priesthood——

PAR. Tut! you are behind the times. Irish leaders court the priesthood no longer. I had whipped them to heel, and they had followed me, every spaniel of them, till then.

BUTT. I should have thought that it was the collie’s service, and not the spaniel’s, that you wanted of them.

PAR. And I had it! For years I had it! I had wrested the crook from the shepherd, and he was

content at last to play sheep-dog to me, lest he should be wholly parted from the flock. He cursed the necessity, but he yielded to it. The Catholic clergy and their prelates stood aloof as long as they dared, but they had to submit at last; and, to do them justice, they made up for their hesitation by their zeal. All orders of them worked well. Bishops and Archbishops barked industriously round the main body, while parish priests collected the stragglers on the hillside. I could have left the Nationalist flock entirely—I did leave it largely—under their control.

BUTT. And a shrewd trick they have served you, it appears.

PAR. They saw their chance and seized it, but they waited till it was actually in their grasp. Not a word—not a syllable escaped these right reverend persons, on the point of conduct, so long as the question of tactics remained doubtful. It was not till Mr. Gladstone found me politically impossible that it flashed upon them that I was morally reprobate.

BUTT. And then?

PAR. And then they descended—these black-coated gentry—like a cloud of ravens upon what they mistook for my political corpse, all eagerness for that imagined feast which was to turn out for them the fiercest of frays. They found themselves fighting with the carrion for their own lives! Ay, and they would have fought for them in vain, had not Death itself turned traitor!



BUTT. You are unjust, Mr. Parnell. You fell by an earlier betrayal than his.

PAR. Ay, by my party's.'

BUTT. No, by your country's. From the moment that the priests recovered their hold upon the people you were lost.

PAR. Not so. They were thrice as strong, and their grasp was three times firmer when, ten years earlier, I challenged them and struck them down. Another year, and I would have brought them to their knees again. But now—but now—it is not I, but the cause of Ireland, that is lost! The priests and the place-hunters will sell the birthright of the nation for a mess of official pottage. Who, indeed, is to prevent them? There never was but one man who could have arrested that infamous bargain; and now—he is *here*.

BUTT. Ay, but what has brought you here? By your own showing, it is the people whom you had redeemed in the past, and could alone have saved from foreign guile and native treachery in the future, who have broken your heart!

PAR. It is too true! It is too true!

BUTT. You own it? And yet you hoped, and were you on earth again you would still hope, to make a nation of them! Be comforted, sir. Death, whom you chid but now, has spared you a bitter disappointment. The task you set yourself was impossible. If you do not overrate your own services

to the Irish people, nor have incorrectly described your recompense, the most formidable enemies of their freedom are to be found, not in their priests and place-hunters, but in themselves. For a race so servile and so thankless must have been born for servitude, and your utmost efforts for their liberation would never have done more for them than to change their masters.

## IV

### LUCIAN AND PASCAL

LUC. Confess now, O my friend, if that name offends you not, that you have done me some injustice.

PAS. You are certainly more reverent in your speech than in your writings, and perhaps in your mind than in your speech. But you may easily forgive me for having thought worse of you than you deserved. Historic tradition has branded you as a wanton mocker at holy things, whose insults to the supernatural were punished even in the upper world. Suidas, you may perhaps have heard, declared that you were devoured by dogs.

LUC. Suidas himself has been devoured, and by a more voracious than the canine maw. Oblivion, I understand, has left nothing of him but the name—unless, indeed, his surviving scholia may be taken to represent his brains, rejected by indigestion, or spared by malice. But I need not grudge his shadowy immortality to this pedant, who hardly lives, even for scholars, save in his spiteful fables about me.

PAS. If letters really humanised, he would have judged you more charitably. A scoffer at the gods you may have been, but I see now that you were something more and better than that.

LUC. Better? I do not know that I can accept the compliment. I honoured wisdom; I revered virtue; I would have kissed the feet of Truth if I could have found my way to her through the crowd of philosophers. But I must rank myself lower as a follower of the good than as a destroyer of the evil. The false and filthy legends of our Pantheon——

PAS. Were the human pollutions of a divine spring—a fountain of living water which from the dawn of man's perceptions has, by God's all-merciful ordinance, welled up perennially in the human heart. The stream, I own, was flowing dull and turbid enough in your day throughout the heathen world: but you did not seek to cleanse it; you did not help the followers of Him whom you called—may the blasphemy be forgiven you!—the “Crucified Sophist” to turn its waters into a purer channel. You strove to dam them at their source.

LUC. Your metaphors mislead you, O excellent one! you cannot know how utterly vile was our religion.

PAS. Nay, it is language which misleads *you*. That which was vile was not religion, but the exterior symbols of the cult. Religion is in the soul, and, implanted there by the Holy One, it is of kin to holiness alone. It touches, it is touched, by nothing

base or foul. But wheresoever in the world the soul of man has been lifted up in prayer or thanksgiving to an invisible Power, there, in whatever ignoble liturgy of paganism, the true God has been worshipped. It was thus, as our apostle told your philosophers, that "He left Himself not without witness, in that He did good, and sent us rain and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." I cannot doubt but that many a simple husbandman of Hellas, blessed with an abundant harvest has in this sense given thanks to the Unknown God, and that while his foolish altar-fumes lingered round the lifeless image of Demeter, the incense of his spirit reached the throne of the Most High.

LUC. I should be glad to believe it—if only for the assurance that the Supreme Being is not so savage and childish as to need placation by the steam of victims. I should wish to think of Him as one who would be content with the love and gratitude of His creatures, letting the roasted kids go where they might. I have never had anything to say against your grateful husbandman of Hellas. His religion has been unassailed by me.

PAS. Nay, for you destroyed its symbols, and symbolism is the only articulate speech of religion for the ruder tongue. Deprived of symbolism, the religious spirit of the mass of mankind must droop and languish, as thought itself would wither among a community of the dumb.

LUC. But surely one may rid a language of a few of its barbarisms, and purge its lexicon of the obscene slang which has too long passed for classical !

PAS. Not, O Lucian, as you essayed to do so. Superstition may mar religion, but you cannot, by the method of ridicule, destroy the one and leave the other untouched. Superstition is to religion as the parasite to the oak ; and ridicule is as the axe set to do the work of the pruning-knife. Not in your fashion did that greatest apostle of our religion, whom but now I cited to you, attempt your task. It was with no words of taunt or railing that he, who never feared the face of man in his denunciations, addressed your Athenian sages on the Hill of Mars. The very excesses of their polytheism were turned to the orator's purpose. He praised them for their profound "religious awe ;" for it is this, and not "superstition," that *δεισιδαιμονία* signifies ; and appealing to the Altar of the ΑΓΝΩΣΤΟΣ ΘΕΟΣ as the warrant for his praises, he suddenly assumed the priesthood of that untended shrine. "Whom, therefore, ye unknowingly worship, Him declare I unto you."

LUC. Yes, I have heard of the speech from those who were among its audience. Its exordium was certainly a master-stroke of rhetorical tact ; and I have always wondered at such graceful urbanity in a Jew.

PAS. There was grace in it, indeed, O Lucian, but in a higher sense of the word than yours. It was

the expression of the apostle's inspired sympathy with all forms of the emotion of worship.

LUC. Maybe ; but it produced all the effect of the most studied and the most undeserved flattery. The Athenians multiplied gods for the sake of multiplying arguments. I doubt whether the Stoic and Epicurean babblers whom Paulos addressed had so much as had experience of the "emotion of worship" in their lives.

PAS. Surely you wrong them. We know that the apostle made converts from among their number.

LUC. Your innocence is childlike, O best of men ! The accession of a few philosophers to your religion was of little more significance than that of the women who accompanied them. Vanity, the desire to be talked about, was the probable motive in both cases, unless, indeed, the women changed their religion to disconcert their husbands.

PAS. How many hearts the preacher may have turned to the true faith is known only to the Searcher of hearts ; how many eyes he may have opened is the secret of the Father of lights. But sure am I that ridicule of their errors would only have hardened and blinded those whose pride and whose vision it was the aim of the apostle to subdue and purge.

LUC. It may be so ; but it surprises me, O worthiest one, to hear you say so. But sparingly, I think, did you yourself practise that mode of treating error which you applaud in Paulos. Your works belie your doctrines.

PAS. My works, O Lucian ! What can you know of them ?

LUC. There are those among us, O most subtle of disputants, who have them by heart ; and many a time have I listened to their recitation with wonder and delight.

PAS. Truly ? I should not have thought that I had any admirer so devoted as to have studied me thus.

● LUC. Nor have you, at least to my knowledge. Those who have thus intently applied themselves to your writings are not your disciples, but your adversaries. They recite your *Letters* with protestations of their falsehood, and maledictions of their author. But to me, who care not an obolus whether your charges against this sect were just or unjust, the skill of your attack and the glitter of your weapon afford perpetual pleasure. Plato himself was not a more consummate master of the dialogue ; nor shall you find a keener dialectic, a clearer analysis, an irony more demurely deadly, in the interrogatories of the Platonic Socrates. I have, it is true, no learning in that lore of mysticism which you handle in your earlier disputations. I cannot follow your deliverances on "sufficient grace" and "proximate power." But the ethics of conduct are matter of interest to the philosophers of every age, and wit is the special inheritance of the Greek. I have listened to your recited colloquies with the—how call you him?—Jesuit casuist, as I should have listened, had the gods allowed me the opportunity, to the



Socratic elenchus of an Athenian sophist. I have watched the discomfiture of "Father Bauny" as I should have watched the toils a-tightening round the entangled feet of Thrasymachus. With what disarming courtesy do you approach your doomed antagonist! With what blandly feigned indifference do you propound the questions which are to undo him! There is the stealth of the serpent in your advance, the fascination of his eye in your grave intentness; it is with his leisurely cruelty that you press your victim into the corner from which there is no retreat; and the mortal blow is at last delivered with all the dazzling swiftness of the reptile's darting tongue. . . . But I do not call this dealing tenderly with error.

PAS. Nor should *such* error be tenderly dealt with. You have failed, my friend, to distinguish between the erroneous and the corrupt. Honest superstition must be warily and gently riddled, for it has its root in religion, and draws its vital sap from the same soil; immoral doctrines of so-called morality cannot with too stern a swiftness be cut away. It is the difference between the parasite and the gangrene, between the natural outgrowth which may kill, but can only slowly kill the parent stock, and the morbid excrescence which is filtering its alien poison at every instant through the ducts of life.

LUC. I greatly admire your aptitude in comparisons and contrasts. It seems to be a talent peculiar to the moderns. The disputants of my

own time would never have thought of attempting to prove a proposition by drawing a couple of pictures and declaring that their resemblance or difference was an argument.

PAS. Analogy, however, is no unsafe guide, if wisely used. You said just now that you cared not an obolus whether my charges against the Jesuits were just or unjust; but you meant, I suppose, that you cared not whether I had truly or falsely imputed to these doctors the teaching which I condemned. Assuming that I imputed it truly (and the accuracy and fairness of my citations from their casuists I have maintained by an unanswered challenge), you will not, I think, dispute the justice of my comparison. Murder, theft, adultery, are surely among the worst diseases of the body social: and what but poison is that doctrine, what but poisoners are those teachers, through which and by whom these loathsome maladies are propagated?

LUC. Gently, gently, O best of men! I may grant you your "poison," perhaps, but "poisoner" begs the question. Administer the antidote with all speed; purge and sweat the sufferer to your heart's content; but be not in too great a hurry to crucify the rival physician. Let us first be sure that he mistook not the poison for a wholesome drug.

PAS. You never knew these men, O Lucian. They were no mistaken theorists; they were conscious charlatans, treating their patients with

sweet, if deadly medicaments, that they might swell the concourse into their consulting-chambers and increase their gains.

LUC. They were blinded, then, by self-interest, and they may be the more leniently judged on that account.

PAS. Leniently! the more leniently for having not merely betrayed but trafficked with their trust! I cannot hope, O Lucian, to find even in the best pagans the Christian horror of sin: but you, who were a philosopher, you, who loved temperance and justice, and were true, according to your imperfect lights, to the nobler conception of human life, bethink you what it is that such men do. Enrolled like ourselves in the army of virtue, clad in its uniform, bound by its oath, practising its exercises, they move unsuspected in our midst, and, for their own advancement, sell the citadel to the besieging passions. By the code of every nation, by the usage of every army, such men are adjudged to die.

LUC. It is to be hoped so; for you have certainly put *these* men to death. You hurled the traitors from the Capitol—I will not say from the Tarpeian rock, for that place of punishment took its name from the criminal who first suffered there, whereas it is through your *Letters* alone, they tell me, that these obscure malefactors will be remembered. But I can well conceive how you must have exulted in the execution of their sentence.

PAS. There, my friend, you are in error. I felt no exultation, or at least I willingly indulged none.

LUC. What! tenderness, again? I thought that to error of this kind no tenderness was to be shown.

PAS. Nor was it. But sternness in inflicting punishment is a different thing from delight in its infliction.

LUC. In the goodness of your heart you misunderstand me. The exercise of skill is delightful in what art soever or upon whatsoever object it be exercised. Even the idle rhetoric to which I gave up my youth was not without its charms. I rejoiced in it as an adept, even after I had learned to despise it as a philosopher. The handicraft of my uncle I hated with all my heart; I would not have given up an hour of meditation to have carven the Zeus of Phidias. But I have seen a sculptor's chisel strike fire from himself, and his soul leap through his eyes to meet the life which the fool fancied he had breathed into the marble. Rhetorician and statuary in one, your writings must surely have gratified both your sense of power and your love of beauty; you must have rejoiced alike in your unerring dexterity of workmanship and in the flawless nobility of your work.

PAS. I am not so self-righteous as to deny it, nor within the limits which our faith prescribes to us, need I scruple to acknowledge it. It is natural for man to find pleasure in the exercise of the faculties

which God has given him: their Divine Bestower has, in the inscrutable counsels of His providence, so ordained it. 'Tis through the earthly delights which He has provided, through the earthly desires which He has implanted, that He perpetuates the human race itself; and He has chosen to perfect our powers of mind and body by stimulating us to their practice with the spur of appetite. I could not, therefore, but take pleasure in the actual labour of refuting the Jesuit ethics: but unmixed exultation, whole-hearted pride in the result—that indeed were a temper not to be indulged in, but to be resisted with all my might. My work, O Lucian, was the reproof of sin, and to have exulted with no alloy of sorrow in the doing of it would itself have partaken of the nature of sin. . . . Do I make myself understood?

LUC. To my shame, O excellent one, you do not. The confession is painful to me, for such is your mastery of exposition that I know the fault must be mine.

PAS. It is good that sin should be reproved; but it were better that it did not exist. The necessity and the work of reproofing it do but serve to remind us that the heart of man is corrupt in all things, and desperately wicked, and self-abasement will soon cast out vain-glory if we meditate on that.

LUC. But why, then, meditate upon it? My wits, by Hermes, must be thicker than I thought. The

destruction of a hostile army reminds us that our country has enemies, but we do not throw dust upon our heads on that account: though, perhaps, it were better to be without enemies than to have to hew them in pieces.

PAS. Alas, my friend! I would that the simile were a true one! I would that the hosts of darkness were thus immiscibly divided from the army of light. But it is not so. Both alike have sinned; wickedness is their common portion, and it is not fitting that one array of sinners should vaunt themselves overmuch on a victory over another.

LUC. An array of sinners reproving sin? What paradox, I pray you, what confusion of Troies and Danaoi, is this? To chide the wicked is not indeed righteousness in itself; but it can never be wickedness. The admonisher of the sinful, so far as he thus serves the cause of virtue, must surely be virtuous. How, then, can you, and those who, like you, have rebuked sinners, proclaim yourselves of their number? The enemies of falsehood and fraud, of violence and incontinence, must of necessity be the friends of truth and honesty, of mansuetude and self-control. How, then, can you speak of the soldiers of these two hostile armies as though they were comrades? It is true that they are of like passions with each other; for it is in the temperate indulgence and the due governance of these that virtue indeed consists: but your military metaphor is in no wise

helped by that. For why should *not* the army of virtue vaunt itself, and all the more for the temptation which it has resisted, over the army of vice? It is those soldiers who maintain their discipline at the cost of their sympathies who deserve best of their commander and their country.

PAS. True, O Lucian, according to the human estimate of desert. But there can be no room for merit here.

LUC. No room for merit in fidelity under temptation? In what guise, O worthiest, would you have us conceive of our benignant mistress Wisdom, that you should thus charge her with treating her friends and enemies alike? \*

PAS. You speak—forgive me—as the heathen, and your abstractions are without meaning for the Christian ear. The Christian is not the follower of Wisdom, but the servant of God.

LUC. Nay, then, of what stuff do you make your God, if faithful service is not to avail with Him, and the good and evil are undistinguished in His sight?

PAS. It is only a difference of language, O Lucian, that divides us. The *good* and the *evil* of whom you speak are merely the just and the unjust of human estimate, the virtuous and vicious of popular repute, the upright, as men count integrity, the wrong-doer, as they measure wrong. These, indeed, and their actions, are ever visible to the all-seeing eye of God; and I should mislead you if I said, in your words,

that "they are undistinguished in His sight." But equally misleading would it be were I to say that God judges between them with the judgment of men. Nothing binds Him, as men are bound, to punish or to acquit. He may stay His hand from the chastisement of the evil, and in the infinitude of His compassion He may forgive them. But those also whom you call "the good" are as far below the level of His justice, as dependent upon the illimitable stoop of His mercy, as the evil. What are our mountains and our valleys to the star? Mere infinitesimal inequalities of surface. And even so, and less than so, are the petty eminences and depressions of our self-styled merit and demerit to Him who dwelleth above the stars.

LUC. I see, indeed, that it was a difference of language that divided us; for you are speaking now in the terms of a new science. I must go to school to you for the very definitions of good and evil.

PAS. God is good, and good is God: definition, O my friend, can go no further than this. All things, therefore, which are not of God, are of themselves evil. Not so was it in the beginning, but it is so now, and so it will be until the Divine purpose hath been fulfilled. The whole creation, I say, is evil; for in His inscrutable counsels He has so willed it, even though all things be the work of His hands.

LUC. Your speech, O marvellous one, abounds in marvels. I had not thought to find such subtlety out



of Alexandria. Proceed, I pray you : my whole mind is intent upon your words.

PAS. I do not hope, O 'Lucian—though it is not in arrogance that I say it—I do not hope to make you comprehend the Christian idea of God. Infinite power and wisdom, infinite beneficence and mercy—these attributes of the Divine Being are, indeed, intelligible to the Christian and to the pagan alike ; but upon the conception of holiness their minds part company. Yet is it upon holiness transcendent, upon the ineffable power of peace and purity, that the deeper adoration of the Christian heart is fixed. God's power and wisdom, God's beneficence and mercy, are among the tolerable splendours of His throne ; but the light before which the angels veil their faces, and which bows the mortal forehead to the dust, is the light of holiness. No man upon whom the word of truth has come can bare his bosom untrembling to its piercing rays ; none endure unmoved the horrors of the foulness within. *Tu Solus, tu Solus, Sanctus !* is the common cry of agony alike from the weakest of neophytes and the holiest of Fathers. Prayer and meditation cannot exorcise the Christian's sense of sin ; fasting and penance cannot wear it out ; even martyrdom will not burn it away. In the cell of Anthony, in the desert of Jerome, on the pillar of Simeon, on the torture-stake of Sebastian, the thoughts of the saints have ever been fixed upon the unutterable holiness of God, the

unfathomable vileness of man. I see now how widely we have misled each other by speaking of *sin*—a word which to you stands either for committed deeds of evil or else for the proneness of man to give way to his temptations. But the *sin* of the Christian—his “original sin,” as our Church has called it—is neither of these; and his *sense of sin*—that absorbing, over-awing, overmastering consciousness, proof against the anodynes of repentance and piety, not to be expelled by a life in the monastery or by a death in the arena, is in greater strictness of language a sense of *guilt*. This it is, all strange as it may seem to you, which the Christian feels. It is not remorse for evil deeds committed that abases him; for his life may have been blameless as an unweaned babe’s. Nor is it in shame for his evil instincts, and the grosser passions of his senses, that he dares not lift his eyes to the footstool of the Holy One! for his whole life may have been one long victorious struggle against the temptations of the flesh. It is, as I have said, O Lucian, a consciousness of actual guilt which bows his head to the earth—of guilt inherited, guilt transmitted from sire to son, like the taint of deadly disease—of guilt by him indelible and irredeemable, beyond the ablution of human tears and the expiation of human sacrifices.

LUC. Pause, pause, I beseech you, O best of men! Show your Christian mercy to the bewilderment of my untutored pagan mind. Let me, like the slave of

a lapidary, gather up and assort these strange new stones of learning which I lack the skill to cut and polish. "Inherited guilt!" Guilt "transmitted from sire to son"! By Heracles! but you Christians have a singular taste in heirlooms. Or is it, perchance, a compulsory transmission? Is the child accursed because the father sinned? The saint, you tell me, is a sinner, though his life may have been as innocent as an unweaned babe's. May it be that—but, nay! it must be by your reasoning, it must follow from your doctrines, that the unweaned babe is itself a sinner.

PAS. You have collected rightly from the premises. In sin are we conceived and brought forth; the curse is upon us even from the womb.

LUC. O Æschylus and Sophocles! into what gigantic house of Pelops have I, then, been born! Reveal to me, O doctor more terrible than the tragedians, reveal to me the origin, recount to me the legend, of this world-wide ancestral curse. What supper of Thyestes, what——?

PAS. Peace, peace, O Lucian! To the gibes which you may well be pardoned for uttering it would be impious in me to listen. There is, indeed, a legend of this ancestral curse more tragic than any Pelopean myth. I would willingly recount it to you, saw I prospect of profit from the recital. But take it not ill, my friend, that I withhold it.

LUC. What! Is the family secret to be concealed

even from Orestes himself? Is he to be hunted to sanctuary, and ask no questions? Or is it to be enough for the unhappy fugitive to know that the Eumenides are yelling in his rear, and when the wretch requests an explanation, is he to be bidden to content his ears with the whistling of the scourges?

PAS. Be serious, I pray you, or I can hold converse with you no longer. I will not, I say, recite to you the legend, as you call it, of this ancestral curse. That legend is for the ears of those alone by whom the curse is felt. And you, O Lucian, I may not reckon among the number.

LUC. You speak as though you pitied me. Do you, then, account it such a privilege to lie consciously under the ban of the gods?

PAS. To be unconscious of sin is to know not the mercy and loving-kindness of Him who taketh away sin. Nay, more, it is to feel the misery of man's lot, while lost in ignorance both of its cause and cure. And yet have I sometimes thought that the all-merciful God has vouchsafed some inkling of the Christian sense of sin to the most virtuous among the heathen. Is it not so?

LUC. It seems like arrogance in me to answer for the most virtuous; but to me, at least, the Divine favour has never been shown in that way.

PAS. Never?

LUC. No. Your Deity has never rewarded my

virtue by making me feel wicked. Perhaps I was not virtuous enough to deserve it.

PAS. Tell me, O Lucian, were you always well pleased with yourself during your life on earth?

LUC. You are rallying me, O master of railery! Or do I indeed seem to you so vain and self-satisfied a person?

PAS. Nay, I am not charging you with active self-satisfaction in that sense. I was thinking merely of repose or disquietude of conscience. Have you never been troubled by a feeling of unworthiness?

LUC. Unworthiness of what? Of the approval of the virtuous? of the respect of the multitude? of the attachment of my friends? Why, truly, yes. I am indeed acquainted—as who is not?—with the sense of unworthiness in that kind.

PAS. But in what way awakened?

LUC. Your question, I suspect, must be a Socratic one. You can hardly be in real want of information on such a point.

PAS. Nevertheless I beg you to answer me.

LUC. I have felt unworthy, then, of the approval of the virtuous whenever I have exceeded temperance in the indulgence of my appetites; unworthy of the respect of the multitude when I have stooped from the freedom of philosophy to put myself even for a time under that yoke of the passions which the vulgar wear perpetually; unworthy of the attachment of my friends when I have failed to assist them in

their necessity, or to make them due requital for their services. Whenever I have so borne myself at any time, I have felt uneasy.

PAS. And not otherwise, or for any other reasons?

LUC. I do not think so. I have, of course, remarked that other men were uneasy whenever they had neglected the sacrifices; but I myself, as you are aware, have always been of opinion that the gods were not greatly interested in that matter.

PAS. Let us leave the gods out of the question. I may assume—may I not?—that, except when you failed to observe the outward rule of conduct which your philosophy had laid down for yourself and enjoined upon you in your relations with others, you had absolute peace of mind.

LUC. I cannot but fear that some snare is being laid for me; but I will boldly answer your question with a Why not? If I had unduly given way to wrath, or lust, or cupidity; if I had too severely chastised a slave for a trifling fault, or if I had debauched the wife of a friend, or if I had made away with moneys entrusted to my keeping, I should reasonably feel ashamed, and to be ashamed is to be ill at ease. But if I can reproach myself with none of these unworthy acts, and with nothing akin to them, or of a like disgraceful nature, I see not what there is to trouble me.

PAS. To be ashamed, as you well say, is to be ill at ease. We are drawing nearer to each other now.

And are you not, then, ashamed of the temptation to commit these acts, however firmly you may resist it?

LUC. I do not understand you. Why should one be ashamed of what is natural?

PAS. But how if human nature itself is a shameful thing?

LUC. Your question, if I may dare to say so, appears to be a jugglery with words. There can be no such feeling as shame for anything which all men possess in common: it is born of the sense of inferiority, and where equality is it cannot exist. Even thieves are not ashamed of their calling among themselves, but only by comparison with the honest. How, then, can man's nature seem to him shameful, when there is no superior nature to which he can compare it?

PAS. There, however, is the very point. He can, he must, compare it with a higher, a Divine nature; though to *you*, indeed, I may not say, "with the nature of the gods."

LUC. No, indeed you may not. I have always avoided comparing myself with the gods, lest I should grow too proud of my virtue. Zeus the adulterer, and Hermes the pilferer, and Dionysus the tippler, might keep the most profligate of mortals in countenance.

PAS. I know; and I speak not of the Divine nature as the barbarous and unclean legends of your religion represented it. But could you form no

conception of Deity as something unspeakably higher, purer, holier, than the nature of man? Could you not imagine it, let me ask you, by idealising human virtues? Call to mind for a moment the most blameless man whom you have ever known; and then imagine a being—name him god or man, I care not which—who should as far surpass your friend in excellence as he himself surpassed the vilest of his race.

LUC. I have obeyed you. Your monster of innocence is in my mind.

PAS. Then, now bethink yourself that even as he is, whom you are imagining, so might all men be: as noble as the worst of them are base, as perfect as the best of them are imperfect. And do you not feel, then, as if the burden of this reflection must abase you to the dust?

LUC. No, by the Dog, not I. I should see no reason to blush for my inches before a live man of six cubits in stature; and you would have me cast dust on my head because I have merely dreamt of a moral giant. Why should we hanker after the unattainable in anything, whether it be length of leg or altitude of virtue? . . . But you look sad. Have I said anything to grieve you?

PAS. You have, my friend, but unwittingly. I cannot but feel sad at perceiving how helpless is the condition of humanity unilluminated by the Divine Word . . . In Thy counsels, O Lord, in Thy counsels was it ordained, that through the perfections of Thy



Son alone should the eyes of man be opened to the depravity of his nature, and the misery of his estate. Give me grace, O Infinite in wisdom, to subdue my——

LUC. I shrink from interrupting your meditations, O most devout one; but you seem to be bringing a new term into the discussion. What is this "misery of man's estate"? Do you mean only that uneasiness of conscience of which we have been speaking? If so, of course I, who know not the uneasiness, can have no share in the misery. But I imagine you to be thinking of something other than that.

PAS. And you are right. I had but a feeble hope of finding in you a comprehension of the Christian sense of sin: but I had thought that perhaps I might lead you to it by a pagan route. Though you might not feel man's sinfulness, you could not but feel his unhappiness, and it appeared to me to be possible that a mind as enlightened as yours might be already half prepared to associate the two. But I foresee that the expectation would be disappointed. Christianity alone has revealed to man that sin and suffering are but two aspects of the same thing, the obverse and reverse of the coin of life.

LUC. But stay! I beseech you. I do not recognise your coinage. I know neither face of your human drachma any better than the other. This "unhappiness of man" which you speak of is as much beyond my comprehension as his sinfulness.

PAS. And you a philosopher! I cannot believe that you are speaking seriously. Who can have contemplated the life of man, and man's ordering of his life, without perceiving both his restless misery and his abiding sense thereof?

LUC. You are speaking of the vulgar, I suppose, and of the least fortunate even among them.

PAS. I am speaking of the entire race, of the healthiest, the highest, and the most powerful, no less than of the needy and the obscure. For do but consider, O Lucian, the common life of man, and you will find the plainest proof of its natural unhappiness in the incessant agitations in which it is now compulsorily, and now voluntarily, spent. One half of it passes perforce in the unconsciousness of sleep; much of the remainder is claimed from the mass of mankind by necessary toil; and what does man do with the remnant that is left? Does he treat it like a blessing or like a curse? as a treasure to be cherished, or as a burden to be shaken off? Let his habits answer.

LUC. But whose habits? Those of the idle and frivolous, or those of——?

PAS. Of all alike: for distraction is the aim of all. It is the end of the pleasure which is made a business, as of the business which takes the place of pleasure; of war as of the chase, of the intrigues of the courtier as much as the intrigues of the gallant, of the trader's no less than the dicer's gambling.

"Pastime" is as truly the name of the occupation which calls itself serious as of the sport which claims but to amuse. Both alike are man's refuge from himself, to each he hurries to escape from recollection of the past and reflection upon the future. Yes ; man who loves nothing but himself hates nothing so much as being left alone with the object of his affections. Pursuing nothing save for himself, he flies from nothing so persistently as from himself. The din of the mart, the clamours of the senate house, the babble of the banquet-hall, the roar of the battle-field,—any of them, all of them, are more endurable to him than the whisper-haunted chamber of his spirit.

LUC. I must reject your proposition for all but the most vacuous and unthinking of men. And even by them repose is constantly commended and often eagerly sought.

PAS. You are right ; but what of it ? True it is that, side by side with that secret instinct, born of the consciousness of their misery, which impels mankind to the everlasting pursuit of distraction, there is another, the relic of their unfallen state, which tells them that the only true happiness is in repose. And from the strife of these contending impulses there arises a confused desire for some unknown goal of rest beyond that endless stadium of agitation which they are ever traversing and never traverse. They amuse themselves with the imagination that when

this or that<sup>a</sup> excitement has been exhausted, this difficulty or the other overcome, there will open to them the portals of repose. The trial is made; the pleasure is tasted, the obstacle is surmounted; repose is won, and found intolerable. And so runs their life away. Their ceaseless struggles to enjoy it have only availed to make them forget it, and in the alternation between ever-new desire and ever-recurring satiety they arrive insensibly at the gate of death. But is that happiness? If it be, there is no difference between happiness and oblivion, and the cupbearer of your fabled gods might have dipped their goblets for nectar in the waters of Lethe.

LUC. You have certainly drawn a dismal picture of the unrest and discontent of the vulgar.

PAS. Of the vulgar? Do you still, then, persist in misunderstanding me, my excellent friend? The ills which I have described are, as I have told you, the common lot alike of the high and the low, of the indigent and of the wealthy.

LUC. No doubt: for ignorance and indolence are not confined to either. But it is I who have been misunderstood. By the vulgar, I mean all those who either from choice, as with most of the rich, or by necessity, as with all of the poor, concern themselves only with the external things of life.

PAS. You mean all men, in fact, except philosophers. . . . But why do you look thus anxiously around you?

LUC. For fear we should be overheard. The philosophers have never forgiven me the *Auction of Lives*; and if I say anything in praise of them in their hearing, they will only suspect it for irony, and wax yet more embittered against me. Let us therefore, I pray you, avoid the word "philosophy"—that coin of language which, once so glittering and clean-cut, has been worn down to an unmeaning counter, deviceless and legendless, by the human tongue. In place of "the Philosophers" I would choose rather to speak of "the Wise." It is a title for which there has been by no means so brisk a competition. And I would assign that name to all those who, whether as the disciples of Zeno or of Epicurus, or in the name of neither, have striven to separate the essence of life from its accidents, and to discover and maintain the worthiest attitude of mankind towards it. These let us place on one side, O my friend, and "the vulgar"—by which I mean the men to whom life is an affair of eating and drinking, of sleeping and waking, of marrying and begetting, of the market and the law-courts, of the bath and the playground—let us place upon the other. And I say, then, that it is to the latter alone, and in no wise to the former, that your melancholy words apply.

PAS. Do you mean that the state of the former is one of unmixed happiness?

LUC. Happiness, for aught I know, may be, like new wine, all the better for mixing. But I would

rather shun altogether the use of a word which has suffered equal maltreatment from the profligate and the pedant, from the haunters of the bagnios and the dogmatists of the schools. I maintain, however, that the state of these men—of the Wise—is one of content and not of discontent, and that their lives are passed, not in disquietude, but in repose. Nay, I will apply to them your own test. You urge, as a proof of the essential misery of human life, that it is spent by universal choice in continual distractions, and that men shrink from nothing so fearfully as from undisturbed communion with themselves. Now, it is to that very occupation that the life of the wise man is by preference devoted.

PAS. I marvel, O Lucian, that so acute an understanding should thus deceive itself with words. The occupation that you speak of is in itself a distraction, and it is only as such that it avails. It is not the object reflected upon, but the employment of the reflective faculty, which tranquillises.

LUC. Ah, now, O master of words, you seem to me to be playing with them. In the act of contemplation, as the Wise at least understand it, it is impossible to separate the contemplated object from the contemplating mind.

PAS. Then, truly, I know not how the Wise do understand that word. Will you tell me that the mind cannot take pleasure in the mere busying of itself with ideas and things which of their own nature

are not pleasurable at all? Of such sort assuredly are the ideas of geometry—of its lines, its angles, and its circles. They are ideas in which of themselves the mind could find neither beauty nor comfort: so that whatever pleasure the geometer derives from considering and comparing them and from investigating their properties and relations, must consist wholly in the exercise of his own intellectual faculties.

LUC. The error into which you have fallen, my friend, is now apparent to me. I agree that in such a case it is the apprehensive energy alone, and not the apprehended object, which gives pleasure. It is the energy alone, I admit, which has been the source of my own satisfaction while engaged in composing a dialogue, or in studying and analysing the tenets of some new philosophy, or in theorising on my own account upon the origin of the universe and the laws which govern it. This, however, is not contemplation, but different from it altogether.

PAS. I must ask you, then, to explain to me the difference.

LUC. It is easily done. The state of the mind in those employments which you rightly call distractions is active; in contemplation it is wholly passive. The men who are seeking refuge from themselves in study, or in the transaction of business, or even in the pursuit of pleasure (since of this also man is said to "make a business"), would be described as busy; but engaged in contemplation the whole world would

call them idle. And seeing that in this so-called idleness I ever found my highest pleasure, I may claim that the mind which received and conveyed it to me was at such moments not machine but mirror, and that it was not in the escape from myself, but in communion with myself, that my joy consisted.

AS. You speak with strange elation! May I ask you how long, without intermission, this delight of yours has ever endured?

LUC. From daybreak until nightfall again and again. Many a time have I seen King Helios Hyperion enter his eastern palace-gate, and slowly pace his mighty hall of audience, the journey of a day to traverse, and pass at last into his western sleeping-chamber, nor ever budged from beneath the vine-shade before my door. I have welcomed that god of the Persians with a Persian's reverence, and, indeed, with the same observances: though I trusted to his godship not to take it ill that I used milk instead of wine for my libation, and did not waste it upon the ground. The mountain kids made shift to spare me that offering from their mother; and when my slave had flanked the milk-bowl with a platter of fresh-plucked dates, I had all I needed till the evening. Thus, then, have I sat unstirring, till daylight became darkness—not a fugitive, forsooth, from the sense of being, but its delighted, its willing, its wooing mistress; no Daphne to the world of things, but a Danæ, passive



in a trance of ecstasy beneath the golden shower of its sights and sounds—the sunlight through the vine-leaves, the procession of the clouds, the hum of the insects, the distant murmur of the Euphrates, the song of the husbandman at his toil: until the sense of vision became fused, as it were, with the sense of hearing into that nameless joy of the soul when, purged of the lusts and passions of its flesh, y prison, it becomes conscious of its oneness, wi the All.

PAS. But what of the next day, my friend? Scarcely, I should think, could such a mood of rapture be protracted even by the saints themselves.

LUC. The next day, my friend, I would perhaps betake me to my books again: or at noon I would climb the mountain to where the vine-dresser sat resting at his midday meal, and talk to him of the promise of the vintage and watch his brown-faced children at their play. Another day perchance I would visit my friend the sculptor across the valley; for I have admired his art like a virtue ever since I ceased in disgust to practise it. Or it may be that I would descend into the town itself, and while away an hour in listening to the chatter of the barber or the gossip of the baths.

PAS. And are these no distractions, I would ask?

LUC. I can scarcely believe, O skilled in dialectic, that I have caught you in a logical error; but surely you have mistaken my elenchus. I had not to disprove

the proposition that the mind requires distraction, but the proposition that only in distraction can it find peace. Could you argue that a certain posture of the body is not restful because to remain in it for ever would give you painful cramps? You could not. Neither can you say that contemplation is not true happiness because it cannot be unchangingly enjoyed. Though that I could ever return to it after an intermission with fresh renewal of zest, and find in it the ample satisfaction of my soul.

PAS. And it was truly so? You were not visited, even at the moment of your fullest contentment, by a sense of something wanting—a something which the world of sense was unable to yield you, and yet which the soul must have?

LUC. Never: or, if ever, only for that brief moment before I remembered that these are the longings, not of health, but of sickness, and that when the soul is yearning for the unattainable it is a sure sign that the body is in need of the leech.

PAS. It is enough, O Lucian; you have convinced me of that which I have sometimes doubted. I am now assured that it was the Gospel itself which first inspired man with the perception of his need of it, and that God did not implant that consciousness in the human bosom in advance. Even the "Repent ye!" of the Baptist may have made but half-awakened converts, and only the coming of our Master Christ have brought this Divine unrest into the world.

LUC. Then, if that, in truth, was what He brought with Him, I see not how you can rejoice at His having come. For it seems to me, though I fear, O most devout, lest I should shock you, that not all the blessings for which you praise Him can weigh one instant in the balance against that world-wide curse.

# V

## WILKINSON AND LORD SANDWICH

LORD S. Well, met, Jack! Egad, I am right glad to see you.

W. Lord Sandwich, your condescension overwhelms me. 'Tis mighty good of you to recognise me at all; but that you should be glad to see me is indeed astonishing.

LORD S. Why so? What the devil, man! We have no politics here.

W. No, my lord, and no liquor either. Yet I never knew you seek any one's society before—at least of our own sex—except either as a political instrument or a pot-companion.

LORD S. Nay, Jack, there you do me injustice. I was always used to relish your wit, even when there was no burgundy to wash it down with.

W. It may be so; but you seldom tried the experiment of taking it alone.

LORD S. True enough. I don't know that anything is the worse for mixing with good liquor. But, wet or dry, you must own that your wit always

jumped with mine, and that until it became dangerous to public order, and—ahem!—offensive to public morality, I never sought to check it.

W. If public order is to be protected by the official burglary of printing-offices, and public morality vindicated by the suborned larceny of private papers, then your lordship's exertions in good causes may be applauded. Other than you must forgive me asking—

LORD S. My good friend, I would forgive your asking anything if you would only forgive my not replying to it. But people who ask questions are so plaguily unreasonable on that score.

W. You never gave me an opportunity of properly proving my pertinacity on earth, my lord. If I could only have got you to the bar of the House of Commons—

LORD S. Ha! still those cursed politics! I am really surprised that you haven't learnt to forget and forgive, as I have.

W. As *you* have!

LORD S. Yes, as I have; and in a devilish scriptural way too, let me tell you. Doesn't somebody in the Gospels say that it may be all very well to forgive those who despitefully use us and persecute us, but that 'tis a much harder matter to pardon those whom we ourselves have injured?

W. I do not recall the passage; but my knowledge

of Holy Writ is in nowise comparable to your lordship's, and I already see the application of the text. You certainly provided yourself in my case with ample opportunity for the display of that highest form of Christian charity which you have mentioned. May you be forgiven as you forgive those against whom you have trespassed!

LORD S. Sit down, Jack! Amen! Come, I am glad to see you in a more rational and religious frame of mind. There is no reason that I know of why we should not become the best friends possible. Indeed, we never ceased to be so until, on my accepting office as Secretary of State, I felt compelled to rebuke your political and moral excesses.

W. Political, perhaps: but—moral?

LORD S. Why not? Hadn't I just "entered the ministry," as the godly say? Ha! ha!

W. You certainly had had a call from the only god you recognised.

LORD S. And I should have been a fool not to have shown due zeal in my master's service. You, Jack, happened to be the Satan of my courtly deity, and it became my duty to tread you under foot. Do you suppose a new-frocked parson would allow his activity to be checked by what I'll be sworn a good many of his cloth are no strangers to—a sneaking kindness for the devil?

W. The comparison is hardly exact. The question is whether even Lucifer himself, if converted to piety,

would not have blushed to inflict such injuries upon Belial as I had to suffer from you.

LORD S. Tut, man! Enough of these complaints! Why, what the devil ails you? You were not used to whine in this fashion on earth. And, after all, it was a fair match between us. You played for popularity and I for power, and if you had to reckon up our gains and losses, even I think you shall find 'em nearly equal.

W. I knew you were ill at accounts, my lord, and that even the Duke of Bedford himself would not have had the face to recommend you for Chancellor of the Exchequer: but I never imagined you so wretched a calculator as you now declare yourself. What! Our gains and losses nearly equal! Equivalence between the things we severally purchased and the prices we severally paid! What *you* bargained for we all know, as well as how little (in your own estimation) you gave for it: and do you mean to assert that what you call my popularity stood me as cheaply as you bought your power?—that years of exile and persecution were as light a price for me to pay as infamy was for you?

LORD S. If by infamy you mean the outcry of the London rabble, I'll own that 'twas no great matter to have faced that. But you, who loved their sweet voices, or made believe to do so, you must have found ample solace for your sufferings in listening to them.

W. The cheers of the most enthusiastic populace would scarce repay a man for what I had to endure from your detestable Government. And was it all cheers, my lord, and no hisses? What of your own brutal mob of followers in the House of Commons—men who pelted me with votes as senseless as the bricks of the street, and insults fouler than its mud? Was it nothing, pray, to have been a mark for the slanders of every blinded bigot who confused the politician with the man, and of every brazen hypocrite who feigned incapacity to distinguish them? A mark for their slanders, did I say? Ay! and for something more deadly too. A target for the bullet of every swaggering place-hunter who was minded to play bravo to the minister, and every weasel-gutted Scot who might hope to avenge my sneers at his empty belly by putting an ounce of lead into mine? Is it nothing to have fought a battle of that kind for years together? But had not I to fight it? and did I ever flinch from it?

LORD S. No, by God, Jack! You were a thoroughbred cock of the game! I never denied that.

W. A handsome tribute, Mr. Secretary, and I thank you for it. You are fortunate in being able to pay such compliments. Facts which stare even you out of countenance must be indisputable indeed.

LORD S. Oh, for that matter, I never bore them any ill will—out of official hours. But a minister



is bound to treat truth like a worthy watering-place acquaintance who is a little wanting in manners. One may recognise her at Bath or Tonbridge, but she must not expect a bow in Whitehall.

W. And no one was more apt than my Lord Sandwich at teaching her to know her place—which was not on the Government benches in either House of Parliament. But that makes your present condescension to her the more gracious. You have admitted my wrongs, and I am obliged to you.

LORD S. Not I! I admitted your hardihood, that was all. As to wrongs—'tis a woman's word, and unfit for a man of sense and spirit to use. If what you say of your lot and mine be true—if your popularity were gotten at so much dearer a rate than was my power—why, the greater folly yours for sticking to so bad a bargain. If you regretted it, you should have made timely submission to the Government and the House of Commons.

W. I never did regret it: and had I made submission, I should have lost that which supported me under the worst of my persecutions—the consciousness of suffering in the cause of the English people.

LORD S. The consciousness of suffering! the cause of the English people! Now, upon my faith and conscience——

W. As full of strange oaths as ever, I perceive.

LORD S. I say, upon my honour——

W. Swear by your office, my lord. The altar before the gift that is thereon.

LORD S. By the bones of St. Francis—and you remember, Jack, how Dashwood relished them grilled—I vow I never looked to find, either in one world or the other, a more impudent dog than myself: but you beat me. The devil fly away with me—as the Buckinghamshire bumpkins were always expecting he would—but you beat me by a distance. You a sufferer for the English people! You a martyr in the cause of anybody but Jack Wilkes!

W. I am not surprised at your sneer, my lord. In the school in which you and I were trained, neither country nor people counted for much. The only difference between us was that you added to this training the after-experience of the oppressor, and I that of the oppressed. It was in resenting my own wrongs that I first learned to sympathise with those of my fellow-countrymen.

LORD S. Hear him! Hear him! Lord, Jack, 'tis as good as a play to listen to you! Pity we cannot run up a hustings here and return you a member for Hades! After all, you might as well have sat for it as for the place you actually represented.

W. Ay, indeed! I might have been returned by a community of shadows for all the respect that your hacks in the House of Commons thought fit to pay to the electors of Middlesex.

LORD S. What? that old grievance again! I

thought the "years of exile" and the compulsory pistol practice were the only wrongs that really rankled in your mind. But it seems we are to have up the expulsion quarrel as well, and to hear how mightily aggrieved you were because the House of Commons had no relish for your company.

W. What right had the House to choose its company? What prerogative of selection among those designated by the free choice of the electors has the Constitution ever conferred upon it?

LORD S. The House adjudged you disqualified to sit, and——

W. Adjudged me disqualified! It is not for the House to adjudge disqualifications for any cause. The law disqualifies, and the law alone. I was neither alien nor felon, nor even peer; and as to my moral character, I maintain that that rather fitted me, if anything, to be raised to the Upper House than excluded from the Lower.

LORD S. Oh, as to that, with all my heart! You don't suspect *me* of being strait-laced, I suppose; and I would as lief have had you for a companion at St. Stephen's as at Medmenham. But what would you have, man? We wanted to drive a dangerous fellow out of Parliament, and your morals made as good a tin kettle to tie to your tail as another.

W. Not so, my lord; you could hardly have made choice of a worse. It was the sight of men like yourself and Dashwood engaged in the persecution

of the companion of your vices which roused the righteous wrath, not only of every foe of tyranny, but of every hater of hypocrisy. It was to you and your like, Lord Sandwich, that I owed my popularity with the English people.

LORD S. More talk for the pot-wallopers! When did a demagogue ever see or pretend to see anything in his ragged following but a full-fledged delegation from the people?

W. What is a demagogue, my lord? What is there even in the name that it should be a reproach to own it? Was Mr. Burke a demagogue?

LORD S. He was a dinner-bell. But to what does this stuff tend? Do we not well know, Jack, you as well as I, that the whole battle over your expulsion and incapacitation was like every other struggle among parties in Parliament, a contest for place, and that if Mr. Burke attacked the disqualifying resolution while young Charles Fox defended it, it was because the first wanted to oust us to make room for his own friends, while the second thought, and proved right in thinking, that he could best edge himself into a place by supporting us.

W. I should not think of questioning your consummate insight into motives of that kind, my lord; but what, pray, have they to do with the question I put to you? Whatever the two sides fought for there must have been a right side and a wrong one. Either ministers and their majority were actually

violators of the constitutional privileges of electors, or the minority were mere factious agitators putting forward a pretended grievance to veil their lust of power, and attempting to pass off as the outcry of an indignant people what your lordship once described to your peers as the "feeble echoes of a desponding ambition."

LORD S. Ha! Did I say that? I wonder whom I stole it from. It sounds somewhat like a sentence from that sharp-tongued rascal who used to lash his Grace of Grafton at such a rate? What was his name?

W. What, indeed? You never knew it, my lord; your colleagues never knew it. Nobody could ever have doubted that, not even if you had officially asserted it. For no man rotted in a jail, no man was even crushed with *ex-officio* informations for anything in the famous *Letters*; and that alone proves you ignorant of who Junius was. For once the malignity of ministers goes bail for their veracity. But the sentence I quoted came never from the pen of Junius. It is thoroughly in your lordship's style. It fell naturally into its place in your argument that it was not the majority of the people of England which was demanding redress of grievances, because only thirteen out of forty counties had, in fact, petitioned for it. Will you argue that question with me now, my lord?

LORD S. What, *here*?

W. Why not? 'Tis quieter than the House in which it was argued before, and cooler.

LORD S. Maybe, but there is nobody to vote, and if you imagine me to have ever regarded a Parliamentary disputation as of any other value than to provide time for the minister to get his majority down to the House, you must have studied my political character to very little purpose.

W. I never made so innocent a mistake. But I thought it possible that in this blank underworld, where there is neither horseflesh nor womanflesh, nor drink, nor dice-boxes, nor duelling-pistols, your lordship might possibly be glad to take refuge in political discussion.

LORD S. Indeed! and seek to relieve the *cnnui* of immortality by what was the most monotonous and interminable of all mortal employments. But go on! There is a kind of pleasure in seeing you play patriot again as in your old brazen days, and with the same old impudent pleas for overruling what, if your friends had only happened to be in office, you would have called "the voice of the people speaking through its only constitutional organ."

W. I need not be at the pains to refute a calumny which I doubt not you would have been equally ready to fling at so high-minded a politician and good a Whig as Mr. Burke.

LORD S. Considering that I have already flung it at him in the course of this colloquy of ours, you

have certainly a right to your modest confidence on that point. Every one knows what a good Whig means. It means a man who has "the people" in his fob like his watch, and can tell what their will is at any moment as one tells what is the hour. He is a kind of popular Chancellor of his own creation, who keeps the conscience, not of the king, but of all the king's subjects.

W. I am well aware that your lordship's Whiggery was satisfied with keeping the conscience of the Duke of Bedford. No one had a better eye for a sinecure than yourself.

LORD S. 'Tis a good jest, Jack, but not your own: and all are not sinecures that look so. A man's conscience is like his health: the less he has of it, the more carefully his attendants have to consult it. No man is really at ease in that regard until, like me, he has been given over by the doctors. But there is malice, I know, in your rallying me with the title of Whig.

W. You were surely as good a Whig as George Grenville, my lord, except, perhaps, that he believed in his Whiggery. And, moreover, you never dropped the title.

LORD S. Dropped it! No, egad! There were good reasons for that. Those who nicknamed us "the Bloomsbury gang" could hardly expect us to drop our vizors. But you know I never played the hypocrite with you, or pretended that the names of

"Whig" and "Tory" were anything but counters in the game for place and power. To get a majority in the House of Commons, and to keep it, was the beginning and end of my politics: and those who feigned devotion to any other principle, like Rockingham and his canting crew, were, in my reckoning, but place-hunters of another and less reputable kind. Besides, I held them to be unfair players at the game. It was to be played in Parliament, and not among the mob outside.

W. Then the opinion of the people——

LORD S. Oh! "the opinion of the people." 'Twas always a mighty convenient fiction for the good Whig, as you call him. It enables him to say that whenever the House of Commons declares against his own political objects—which is another word for his own political interests—it is false to the commission which it has received from the country.

W. Not so. There must have been a clear usurpation of authority on the part of the House before a sound Whig would take upon himself to say anything of the kind—as clear an usurpation as there was in the disqualifying decision pronounced upon myself.

LORD S. Tut! Who is to be the judge on that point but the House itself?

W. What! define its own authority?

LORD S. Why, who else should, or who else can, in the devil's name?



W. The law and the constitution.

LORD S. Lawyers must declare law, and the lawyers refused to interfere. As to the constitution, 'tis the mere nickname of a measuring-wand, which can be as easily lengthened by the minister as it can be shortened by the Opposition. If a majority of the House chooses to say that this or that is the law, and if no court will interfere with it, the law it is.

W. In my case, then, my lord, you would have imposed two hundred and odd despots on the country which would not brook a single tyrant.

LORD S. Yes—if a country can be said to tyrannise over itself—I would. Why, what, pray, were your two hundred and odd despots but the country itself?

W. They? the nominees of borough-mongers and the lick-spittles of the Court!

LORD S. Oh, your servant, sir! If you are for a reform of Parliament before you will allow its authority you are likely to have trouble enough in governing the country, as time goes on—at least so long as there is enough of factious acuteness in the world to discover flaws in our representation.

W. To challenge the constitution of a court is not to question its jurisdiction.

LORD S. 'Tis much the same thing, however, if the prisoner is to be allowed to persevere with his challenge until he has got a tribunal to find in his

favour. But that was ever the way of the Whigs. Parliament has always been to them like one of the idols of my namesake islanders—those savages, you remember, to whom Cook made the head of the Admiralty stand sponsor—worshipped to-day and belaboured to-morrow. They banged their wooden deity to their heart's content in 1768-70; and in 1784, when they wanted their god for the damning of young Pitt, they were on their bellies before it to a man, in pretended adoration. Who heard anything against the House of Commons or in favour of "the country" then?

W. I am not concerned to excuse their inconsistencies. I was no more a Whig in the party sense than I was a Wilkite.

LORD S. Good! Then give up your case, Jack, and own yourself a seditious rogue. Ha! ha! For there's no way of defending your rioters and yourself from any one who chooses to pronounce the whole pack of you worthy of the cart's tail, except it be the Whig plea. How dared you stir up commotion against the House of Commons, you dog, unless you had Divine authority for saying that the rabble knew the real mind of the electors, and that the House did not? And revelation of that kind has never been granted to anybody but a good Whig.

W. You need not look about, my lord, for the inspiration of that prophecy which the event confirms. The House of 1782 proclaimed the condemnation of

the House of 1770. The entry in the records of the latter Parliament remains a perpetual witness to the servile violence of the earlier.

LORD S. Psha! 'Tis a witness to nothing but a shifting of the political balance. 'Tis no proof at all that the wrongs of Alderman Wilkes, and the noisy citizens who mobbed their betters in support of him, gave any concern to the electors of the country either in one year or the other. By 1774 both king and people had grown sick of the quarrel, and were glad of any excuse for ending it.

W. Nay, my lord! Is that any reason why the later House should have gone out of its way to record a censure of its predecessor's action? For such a step as that there could be no other reason than this—that the Parliament which expunged my sentence felt assured that the Parliament which imposed it was no faithful representative of the people.

LORD S. And yet each was alike an assembly packed by borough-mongers! Ha! ha! ha! On my soul, Mr. Wilkes, for a man who was no more a Whig than a Wilkite, you can preach with the one as well as you could shout with the other. How came it about, pray, that so vilely ill-constituted a chamber righted you at last!

W. There are some warnings which even the most corrupt of time-servers dare not disregard. But do not imagine, my lord, that I felt any peculiar gratitude

even to the assembly that reinstated me, or that I thought it needed purging any the less for that. A House of Commons which derived its power, in truth instead of only in name, from the people, would never have dared to expel any member not disqualified by law, who was the free choice of a constituency.

LORD S. Be not too sure of that. There is nothing so magical in a popular vote as to make all men wise on whom it is conferred. Do you think by mere multiplication of electors to make the representatives of each constituency more regardful of the right as you call it, of any other constituency to foist upon them a hateful associate? Do you believe it impossible in a reformed Parliament for another John Wilkes to make his appearance in the House of Commons, and another excluding resolution to find a place in its journals?

W. I believe that such a scandal——

LORD S. Which, Jack? I mentioned two.

W. 'Tis but a poor wit, my lord, that requires the ill manners of an interruption to give it point. I believe, I say, that no such scandal as the vote which expelled me from the House could have been witnessed in a popularly constituted Parliament, and that if it had, it would have been much more speedily and sternly rebuked by the country.

LORD S. Ay, truly? Then, egad! I should like to know why. Which of the two scandals, think you, would be the more unlikely to happen—the election of

a Wilkes or his exclusion? Or is it that the country would be so little scandalised at the former event as to be doubly shocked at the latter?

W. Your lordship's raillery is not very difficult to meet; for the question which you have just put in irony may be answered quite seriously in the affirmative. The country would not be—nay, it never has been—scandalised by the entrance of any duly qualified member freely chosen by a constituency into the House of Commons, whatever the defects of his private character. It would justly deem those defects to be no affair of any one so far as politics are concerned, and would be as justly indignant at the hypocritical tyranny of any House of Commons who should insist on wresting them into a pretext for exclusion.

LORD S. A nation of philosophers, hey?

W. I see nothing in such behaviour but the plainest common sense.

LORD S. I have heard some tiresome discourses declare that common sense is the highest philosophy, and I know from my own experience that no man governs himself wholly by its dictates unless he has something of the philosopher about him. What do you suppose will have become of popular prejudice in the days you are looking forward to?

W. Of popular prejudice?

LORD S. Ay! You seem to have imagined to yourself a nation of Camdens, a community of

cold-blooded constitutional doctors, who will only ask each other what are the candidate's rights as a citizen, and not whether he is a disreputable scoundrel who would only disgrace civil rights by being permitted to enjoy them. Is not that your idea?

W. I confess, my lord, that, wondrously elevated as you seem to think such a standard of political enlightenment, I do not regard it as unattainable. I am indeed of opinion, as you know, that it had actually been attained by many more Englishmen in my own time than the king and his ministers were ever willing to believe. My persuasion is that the majority of the English people were not less earnest, if more self-restrained Wilkites, than the crowds who burnt a jack-boot and a petticoat instead of the *North Briton* in '63 and rolled Charles Fox in the mud in '71.

LORD S. Never believe it. Out of every hundred tongues which swelled the cry of "Wilkes and Liberty!" and out of every hundred pair of ears—and I'll throw you in the short ones with the long—that listened to it willingly, there were not a dozen wagging in the jaws or sprouting from the skulls of men who cared one straw for Liberty, or one peppercorn for Wilkes. The London mob were in one of their surliest humours, the people of the country were in the grumbles at a score of things. They were sick of the Scots, disgusted with the

Princess Dowager, disappointed with the young king. Any stick will do to beat a dog with ; you were the stick they caught up. But never suppose for a moment that, had times been quiet, and the people contented, they would have troubled themselves about the arrest of a scribbler for seditious writing, or his punishment——

W. On another and a trumped-up charge, when the first was found ineffectual? You think not, my lord? Be it so. Let us suppose the English people worthy of the men who were ruling them in 1763. Nay, let us suppose, if you please, that but for their own private discontents, they would have been equally indifferent to that malignity of persecution which hunted me from my seat in the House of Commons six years afterwards. I did not so read the character of my countrymen even in my own day ; but I should despair of human nature itself if I thought that the apathy which you ascribe to them under wrong and oppression was inveterate and imperturbable. I do not believe, I say, that even fifty years after my arbitrary expulsion from the House of Commons a like outrage upon the rights of constituencies would have been probable. A hundred years afterwards, and especially assuming a reform of the representation, I think it would have been impossible.

LORD S. A “purified” House of Commons would be more ready, you mean, to welcome a dirty associate.

W. No : but less patient of a foulness more repugnant than his—the hypocrisy of those who, as a pretext for excluding him, pretend horror at vices or at opinions which shock them nowhere else but in Parliament. But such a House as I imagine would be not more disgusted at the hypocrisy of the pretext than contemptuous of its irrelevance. They would put it aside as soon as looked at. They would hold that the sole qualification for a member is that, being legally competent to serve in Parliament, a constituency has lawfully chosen him thus to serve, and were he the most odious of human beings, his fellow-members would conquer their qualms and admit him.

LORD S. Judges, in fact, are what you expect to find in them : full-bottom-wigged, ermine-tipped, owl-visaged judges, by the Lord !

W. Is that character, then, so unbecoming a “high court” ?

LORD S. It would be a devilishly inconvenient one for the purposes of a minister.

W. You reason too exclusively from personal experience, my lord, in assuming that English ministers will always be on the side of injustice. I can imagine circumstances in which a Government would ask nothing better than that the House of Commons should deal with the rights of candidates and constituencies in the strict spirit of the judge ?

LORD S. Can you ? Then 'tis more than I can. I



should have thought they might always ask something better than what they have no chance of obtaining. Why, sure, if the House of Commons should ever become capable of behaving like so many judges, when it came to a question between the "Ayes" and "Noes," there would be an end on't as a House of Commons. Trust me, Jack, I am sorry to see an old crony of mine, and a good fellow too at the bottom, the victim of such fantastic imaginings. Rest assured, my friend, that even if another question of Parliamentary incapacity should arise, the House will never deal with it in any but the old fashion. Rely upon it that it will not be constitutional lecturing, but what you call "prejudice" which will carry the day.

W. Then the country will bring the House to its senses the day following.

LORD S. There will be no more prejudices then, you think, in the country than in the House?

W. Yes, one more perhaps—a prejudice in favour of fair play. That has always been strong among Englishmen, as none should know better, my lord, than you and your accomplices, who cowered beneath their wrath. They have ever been true to that cause, save only when they have been led astray by their own ignorance or by the falsehood of others. And those are evil influences, which are fast losing their power over men.

LORD S. You believe that?

W. All men believe it but those who have an interest

in doubting it. I can understand your lordship's incredulity.

LORD S. Better, I should think, than I can your faith—or could, if I were fool enough to think it sincere. But you are impudence incarnate, Jack, to talk in this fashion to me. An augur who refuses to exchange grins with his brother must be a shameless dog, indeed ; and who could bear to hear one quack doctor bidding another rejoice that colics have disappeared, or that bumpkins no longer believe in bread pills ? Why, man, if there had been no ignorance among the people, or no appetite for the lies we fed it with, what would have become of you and me ?

W. Well, I might, perhaps, have had to learn a new trade ; but you, my lord, would have starved. It is the bad minister who makes the demagogue : the falsehoods of authority have to be fought with the half-truths of popular leaders ; but the day when the people are enlightened enough to see through the arts of the former, the occupation of the latter will be gone. If a violent majority could ever be found to pervert the plain issue of justice in the case of another John Wilkes, a nation, disposed towards a just judgment by that very enlargement of their liberties which would give them new power of enforcing it, would speedily warn their disloyal House of Representatives to undo its work.

LORD S. Wonderful ! 'Tis only necessary, then, to enlarge the powers of a tribunal in order to ensure

the wisdom and justice of its decrees. On this foot, Jack, your liberties would have been safer before a Turkish Bashaw than in the Court of King's Bench.

W. The day will come, nay, by this time, I doubt not, it has come, when, if the House of Commons should again usurp authority to reject the choice of a constituency—which I cannot believe possible—the country would, to the first protest of the claimant, respond with a voice as sovereign and silencing as one of the old decrees of royalty: "Let right be done!"

LORD S. What? If the fellow were unpopular?

W. Who could have been more unpopular with every saint and sycophant in the kingdom than I? And see how my cause was taken up. But why speak of our own times? The age, my lord, that tolerated you as a minister——

LORD S. Might well have been less liberal, I admit. We both of us owed something to its laxity, for if it made me a minister, it made you a popular hero. Your mob was no more strait-laced than my majority; and I don't admit that there was any more insincerity in the horror of Parliament at the vices of John Wilkes than there was in the disgust of the populace at——

W. The treachery of Jemmy Twitcher? Ah! there I differ from you, my lord.

LORD S. Of course you do. But you won't deny that if ministers relied on the servility of Parliament,

you owed much of your vogue to popular ignorance. And I see not whence you get your belief, that a more enlightened people, as you call it, would be as free from prejudices of all kinds as those who were too ignorant to have any. I suppose that greater enlightenment means better morals, more religion, if not more loyalty, hey?

W. No doubt.

● LORD S. Then, how the devil, Jack, can you believe that a moral, religious, and loyal people would imitate their godless and seditious forefathers by running at the tail of another such rogue as you?

W. The more of these virtues they possessed, the more deeply they would reverence justice. See here, my lord, I will put a case to you. I will imagine a man who should unite in himself every circumstance of scandal which offended your virtuous ministers and your Parliament in me, and should add yet more offences of his own. He should be accused, as I was, of advocating seditious opinions, and of using language injurious to the Royal House; but, unlike me, he should have gone the length of recommending republican in place of monarchical government, and should have levelled his insults at Royalty in public speeches to indiscriminate audiences. He should stand charged, like me, with the authorship of writings which outrage public morality; but, unlike me, he should have published, as well as written, them, and they should have differed for the worse from mine, as immoral doctrines

differ from licentious jests. And lastly, he should lie, as I lay, under the reproach of impiety; but, unlike me, he should be a deliberate, instead of a careless, blasphemer, and have publicly sought to undermine religious faith, while I only privately ridiculed religious rites. But if, along with all these titles to popular odium, he should be able to put forward the one claim upon the House of Commons and the country, that he had been freely chosen by its constituency to be its representative in Parliament——

LORD S. Well?

W. I am firmly persuaded that the House would not dare, nor the country bear, his exclusion from his seat.

LORD S. You are? Then I would to Heaven, Jack, that we had something to bet with in this cursed place, for I should like to hold you a heavy wager that, if ever such a case should occur as you have imagined, you would find yourself woefully mistaken.

## VI

### TENNYSON AND VIRGIL

TEN. Sweetest of the world's great poets and greatest of its sweet singers, I salute you.

VIR. Welcome to a poet is the poet's homage ; but more welcome still was the tribute—for it is known to me—of your noble ode. And most welcome of all in this, that its highest praises were given to my greatest poem.

TEN. The *Georgics*, it is true, are, of all your poems, the most dear to me. Yet deem not, O Virgil, that your Roman epic leaves me cold—that I am insensible to the loftiness of its spirit or to the majesty of its strain. How, indeed, could I be so *here*—here in these pale kingdoms which live for ever for the world of men in your story of Æneas ? Through what stage of my journey hither, from the beach of Styx to the vestibule of Orcus, and the empty realms of Dis, have I not been companioned and haunted by your immortal verse ?

VIR. Does it still speak, then, to the hearts of so distant a generation ? Surely it must be but with a faint and alien voice.

TEN. *Non obtusa adeo gestamus pectora.* Nay, what a heart must be, his in which that wail of infants, *flentes in limne primo* awakens no echo, and whereon that piteous vision of the bereaved leaves no impression!—

*Tendebantque manus ripæ utterioris amore.*

Ah, poet of the magic phrase! The soul of man and woman will be dead indeed, and stilled for ever the ache of loss, the anguish of farewell, the “yearning for that further shore” to which our dear ones have departed, ere those five words of yours shall lose their power to unseal the fount of tears.

VIR. They are well enough; but it is not by one great passage—no, nor by a score of such, that a whole poem becomes great.

TEN. I grant it. But how many are required to make it so? Must a poem, to be great, be always at its greatest, and the poet ever soaring at his nearest to the stars?

VIR. That, doubtless, were impossible. Yet I think of my friend Horatius, and of the *purpurei panni* that he so justly reprehends.

TEN. Horatius, it is true, sustains himself throughout many of his Odes at his highest level. But why? Because he never stretched his pinions in the serious lyric save for the shortest of flights. He knew better; he admits it, indeed, in his warning to the poet who would rashly essay to emulate Pindar. Horatius had no mind to share the fate of Icarus, and

though the glory of Augustus and the grandeur of Rome at times inspire him, he takes care to confine his inspiration within the limits of twenty Alcaic stanzas. The *Æneid* is not all "beauties," nor should it have been. That it is not so is what distinguishes you from the luscious Lucan, and lends to your poetry an unstudied charm in which his is lacking. For yours is, as his is not, the method of Nature herself. The orchard is not all fruit, nor the wayside bank in spring-time all flowers. Nature needs the foil of the simple herbage for her blossoms, and willingly embroiders her most splendid tissues on the homespun of the plain brown earth. Bethink you, too, of the demands of your great work. You had a mighty theme to unfold ; but the process of evolution was a long one, and you had to accustom your reader to accompany you without too frequent and fatiguing appeals to the stronger emotions. In nothing does your mastery of your art more powerfully impress me than in your resolute rejection of irrelevant adornments.

VIR. As much as that might be said for the prose historian.

TEN. Not so ; for the high discourse of the poet, the authentic language of poetry, is audible in your simplest line. The ear and the imagination are satisfied with the stately procession of your hexameters as they march onward, content with their own unflinching grace and dignity, even when they do not



rise into the sublime. And how often are they thus uplifted! Not only in the descent into Hades, but in the fall of Troy, in the love-story and the death-bed scene of Dido, in the prophetic blazonry of the Divine Armourer . . .

VIR. Forbear, forbear, O my friend, to praise *that* effort of my Muse. For when I recall the Homeric Shield of Achilles, I marvel that the *Æneid*, narrowly even as it did so, should have escaped the flames.

TEN. The Artificer of the shield would himself have refused the offering. Vulcan would never have permitted the consummation of such a sacrilege.

VIR. I would that you had not turned my thoughts to Homer. His name is to me a name of despair. Men speak of all poets as "divine;" but there are degrees of deity, and I was to Homer as Vulcan to Jove—as the cunning and laborious craftsman to the Wielder of the thunderbolt, and the Compeller of the clouds! And yet how faulty is the comparison! For behind the godhead of the sightless seer, and inseparable from it, lay the transcendent skill of the craftsman working by conscious means to a pre-determined end, and shaping the structure, modulating the rhythm, of his verse with unerring mastery,—sculptor and musician in one. It is Zeus condescending to the hammer and anvil of Hephaistos, Apollo putting the pipe of the shepherd-boy to his own immortal lips. But most of all does he abase me when he speaks with one and the same voice to the poet

versed in all the mysteries of songcraft and to the simple man. Gladly would I exchange all the adventures of Æneas, from the landing at Carthage to the slaying of Turnus, for that one scene of the aged Priam kneeling to kiss the hand that slew his son.

TEN. Fear no idle flattery from me, O Virgil. You are too great not to recognise a greater. Supreme is Homer among the poets of the world: supreme, if not in feeling and imagination—and I know not, nay I doubt, whether that be so—at any rate, in expression. But that is because he belongs to the childhood of the world, and is as much nearer as is the child than the adult to Nature and to God. Therefore let no poet of the after-time essay to imitate the mere manner of his speech; he who does so will but cover himself with ridicule. Let him rather study the holy simplicity of Homer's genius, even as the Founder of my faith has taught men to school themselves by the innocence of the child. It is because you were no slavish mimic of the Homeric speech, though you had drunk deep of the Homeric spirit—it is because, though in the story of Æneas you chose a subject which Homer might well have taken for his theme, you invented for it a golden style which is stamped for ever with your own individuality—it is for this reason that you are as much the despair of later imitators as he.

VIR. In one attribution you do me no more than

justice. I was, indeed, no servile copyist of the divine Ionian: my manner, whatever its imperfections, was my own. Howbeit, similarity of subject will always invite comparison of treatment, and I was more at my ease on that score in the *Georgics*. For, without boasting, I know that I need not shrink from competition with Father Hesiod.

TEN. With Homer you do not compete nor attempt it; and you need fear no more foolish comparisons. The world of scholars has taught a larger world to recognise the purely Latin genius of the poetic speech which you perfected, and to see the ineptitude of setting it side by side with Homer's. As well compare the oratory of Cicero with that of Demosthenes. No; the only rivalry you have to dread—though truly it is formidable—is that of a fellow-countryman of your own. There are some of modern times who even assign the palm to him; who hold that Roman poetry has struck a loftier if a ruder note than the Virgilian, and that it sounds through a hexameter less artful perhaps, but more august. Do you know it? I see you do.

VIR. Nay, what Roman of my day knew it not? It is of the mighty voice of the Epicurean that you speak. The hexameter of Lucretius is like an echo of that stormless thunder which rolls round the brazen dome of heaven on some still and sultry day. Nay, it is the answer as well as the echo: the fearless yet solemn answer of the poet to the voice of those

gods whom he set so far from men. . . . But it is no more human than the thunder itself, and it awakens no feeling in the human breast but that of a shrinking awe.

TEN. Shall I have your pardon, O poet for whom men have mingled love with awe and reverence, if I say that you are unjust? Surely the verse of Lucretius has its moments of stern pathos, of austere tenderness, of grave and lofty pity for the lot of man upon earth.

VIR. I do not deny it; but it is the tenderness, the pity, of a philosopher, as remote as his own sequestered gods from those he compassionates. He boasts in one splendid and sonorous line of the exploit of his master, Epicurus, of him who

Extra

*Processit longe flammantia mœnia mundi.*

Well, the disciple has followed his master beyond those flaming walls. It is there that, in his verse, he habitually abides; it is thence that he surveys the fortunes of the race of man; and if for a few brief moments he is conscious of a common humanity with them, they are for the most part no more to him than Atoms concreted from the Void. The toil and rest of the husbandman and the herdsman, the simple joys and sorrows of the tiller of the soil, the daily labour in the furrow, the nightly slumber in the farmstead—tell me, I pray you, what he knows or what he cares for these.

TEN. I meant not to compare him with you in the general estimation of the world. You are nearer, far nearer, to the common heart of man than he. Nor (speaking for myself) would I match his poetic artistry for one moment with yours. He has crudities and roughnesses ; he has even tricks and mannerisms. The alliterations which he uses occasionally with so exquisite an effect are persisted in till they fatigue, I had almost said till they disgust. Not always does he draw such a prize as in his

Neque nix altâ concreta pruinâ  
Cana cadens violat.

Even in his

Funde petens placidam Romanis, Incluta, pacem

he begins to ride his hobby rather too hard ; and too often we have some such mechanical jingle as his

Fortunasque tuas omnes turbare timore

and his

Ferat flammai fulgura rursum

and (within three lines of it) his

Multâ munita virûm vî.

In your verse there are no such mannerisms, no such revelations of a too conscious striving after merely local effects.

VIR. It is true that I laboured to conceal my art ; and true also that I made it my constant endeavour

to add to the flexibility and to vary the cadences of the Lucretian hexameter, in which, great as it was, the defects of a too rigid structure and a too monotonous note were plainly to be discerned.

TEN. And admirably, O Virgil, did you succeed. The hexameter took its final and faultless shape in your hands and became eternally yours. Never, but for you, should I have described it as the "state-liest measure ever moulded by the lips of man." Yet how much, after all, do you owe to Lucretius! How large, after all the splendid contribution of your own genius, is that residue of debt to him which you are too generous to repudiate! When you transfigure common things with the magic of poetry you are yourself alone; but he is with you whenever you aspire. Who can fail to trace his influence in your invocations to the gods? How deeply must you have felt the grandeur of his

*Æneadum genetrix, hominum divûmque voluptas,  
Alma Venus, cœli subter labentia signa  
Quæ mare navigerum, quæ terras frugiferentes  
Concelebras: per Te, quoniam genus omne animantum  
Concipitur, visetque exortum lumina Solis,  
Te, Dea, te fugiunt venti, te nubila cœli  
Adventumque tuum; tibi suaves dædala tellus  
Summittit flores; tibi rident æquora ponti  
Placatumque nitêt diffuso lumine cœlum.*

Sometimes his very phrases seem to have run in your head. Your "tereti cervice reflexam" recalls that impassioned description of the captured Mars, "æterno devinctus vulnere amoris."

Atque ita suspiciens tereti cervice reposita  
 Pascit amore avidos inhians in te, Dea, vultus  
 Equæ tuo pendet resupini spiritus ore.

Nay, in describing the very triumph of Lucretius himself over superstitious terrors, you use the self-same phrase that he himself employs in speaking of Epicurus—

Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas  
 Atqui metus omnes et inexorabile fatum  
 Subjecit pedibus.

Is not this the “*reliigio pedibus subjecta*” which Lucretius records as the great achievement of his master?

VIR. I confess it is; but I may easily be pardoned. Who could write of that great spirit save in his own words? But recall the two lines that follow—

Fortunatus et ille deos qui novit agrestes  
 Panaque, Silvanumque senem, Nymphasque sorores.

There, indeed, I speak of my own less lofty poetic mission; and the language in which I speak of it is wholly my own.

TEN. And your own, as I have said, it will ever be, subject and verse alike. Fortunate were you, of a truth, to have known those woodland gods so well. It is not the least of your claims upon the heart of modern man. How strange, O Virgil, has been your fate! To have been almost deified by mediæval Christendom as a prophet summoned from among the heathen by the Christian's God, and to live

again for a later age, as the one voice among the ancients which has given utterance to its vague world-sorrow, its pathetic love of Nature, its tenderness for the brute creation, its yearning sadness "at the doubtful doom of human-kind." But it is the first apotheosis which is the more wonderful.

VIR. I have heard of it from the shade of the Florentine poet who feigned to have taken me for his Hermes. But I would willingly hear more of it—from you.

TEN. We have not yet spoken of the *Eclogues*.

VIR. They, indeed, were imitations, if you will. It was no serious fluting match between myself and Theocritus, as between some Thyrsis and Damætas of his own. In most of my *Eclogues* I merely turn one of the Sicilian's idylls into such Latin hexameters as Apollo pleased.

TEN. Then it will not wound you to know, O Virgil, that the modern world prefers the original to the imitation. When Menalcas and Damætas pipe against each other, it is too apt to send us back with renewed pleasure to their Trinacrian prototypes. The note first heard in the pastures of Sicily awakes but a faint if a sweet echo from your Italian hills. But what of the Pollio?

VIR. The Pollio is in another manner. There I parted company with the Sicilian poet, and thought only of doing honour in verse of my own sole imagining to my patron and friend.



TEN. Was it the Sibyl or the Muse by whom you were inspired?

VIR. It pleases you to jest with me: it was the Muse.

TEN. Then the Virgin whose return you prophesy was not the mother of the Christian's God; nor the Child her Divine Infant.

VIR. What is this, O immortal Gods? The "nascens puer" was the baby boy of Asinus Pollio; the Virgin was Astræa.

TEN. Then "occidet et Serpens" does not foretell the death of the Evil One; nor the effacement of the "sceleris vestigia" the redemption of the world. Nor are we to understand "vulgo nascetur amomum" as meaning that the blameless flower of Christianity should overspread the earth.

VIR. You speak incomprehensible things.

TEN. Well may you find them so. Yet it was upon these shadowy though gracious fancies that the imagination of the earliest Christian world was fed; and it was out of wilder, cruder, more grotesque materials that later ages built up their legend of Virgilius the Mage, who lived for the mediæval vulgar as a wizard and wonder-worker, while the great Dante saw in him the loftiest of poets, and his fittest leader through the kingdom of the Shades. These myths, it is true, have passed away for ever; yet your glory remains. For there is something, O Virgil, that brings you nearer to us than such

childlike fables of the mediæval world. Nay, between you and us—though now I speak not of the European nations as a body, but of one of them alone—there is an even closer bond than your love of field and furrow, than your pity for the flitting and shadowy race of mortals, and than all the mystic sadness of your song.

VIR. Of what nation do you speak?

TEN. Of the people of that storm-beaten island of the Northern sea, which Rome, under her early Cæsars, flung half contemptuously into the wallet of her conquests. I speak of the Britons, divided from you by the entire globe.

VIR. And what peculiar charm has my verse for them?

TEN. You sang the glory of Empire as none has ever sung it before or since; and you sang it in the ears of a people who are lords of a greater empire than your own.

VIR. A greater empire?

TEN. Yes, a greater. For though the Europe over which you ruled has become its own master, our remote and barbarous Britain has stretched her sway over crowded Asiatic millions, over a mighty Continent in the southern ocean, and, in the North, over a land so vast that its northern confines are lost amid the ice-fields of the Pole. And the Briton rejoices in his dominion as the Roman through your lips rejoiced in his. He grasps the sceptre of his

power with all the Roman confidence and pride ; as well as the Roman conqueror has he known how to spare the submissive, and to crush the defiant ; and he has imposed his disarming law on much more numerous and not less warlike peoples than were ever reduced to unwilling quiet under the Roman Peace. If the Briton dares not imitate the splendid arrogance of your "*Excudent alii spirantia mollius æra*"—with its calm disdain of every other art save that of rule—the immortal lines in which you utter it find an echo in his inmost soul. In that great passage there was but one touch wanting to complete the parallel between Rome and Britain ; and that touch has been added by a later poet of your own race and language who, in describing Rome's treatment of the conquered, has also described our own.

*Hæc est in gremium victos quæ sola recepit,  
Humanumque genus communi nomine fovit,  
Matris non dominæ ritu, civesque creavit  
Quor domuit nexuque suo longinqua revinxit.*

You know those lines of Claudian ?

VIR. His Shade has recited to me the whole poem in which they occur.

TEN. You would hardly object, I think, to their being fathered upon you.

VIR. Down to the word "*ritu*" I would adopt them ; but only on the strict terms of rejecting the rest. What ? "*Recepit—fovit—creavit—revinxit.*"

Sovereign Apollo! how vile a repetition! For four successive lines ending with four verbs of the same mood, tense, number, and person, you would search the *Eclogues*, the *Georgics*, and the *Æneid* in vain.

TEN. The lines, however, are much quoted by the Briton of these latter days, for their sentiment.

VIR. I applaud the sentiment, though I reprehend the verse. But why should the lords of a greater empire than the Roman take any Roman poet for their spokesman? Have you no poets of your own race to celebrate it?

TEN. None; or none at least in so majestic a strain as yours.

VIR. Yet you yourself, they tell me, were one of the greatest of your country's poets. How came you to leave the glories of its rule unsung?

TEN. I have not so left them, when occasion offered. But my opportunities were few and late. When my powers were in their prime, my countrymen were indifferent to their Empire; and when they awoke to its greatness, I was old.

VIR. And has no poet who has succeeded you been inspired by the theme?

TEN. Yes, many; but only one pre-eminent in power, and to him both grandeur and grace are lacking. His voice is a trumpet-blast and his song a battle-cry, the fitting poetry, doubtless, of a people whose empire, great as it is, is still in the making. Through his strains you hear the fierce delight of

strife, and even the high elation of victory ; but never, as in yours, the proud consciousness of dominion and the large calm joy of rule.

VIR. But when your work is accomplished, will not that note of sovereignty be heard ?

TEN. It may be so ; and perhaps I should rejoice that that time is not yet. For—let me not anger you—the history of your own nation instructs us, that when the poet of a people exchanges the Spartan fife for the lyre, and the untutored call to arms for the cunningly fashioned hymn of empire, it is a sign that they have scaled their predestined heights of conquest, and that their foot is already on the downward slope.

## VII

### THE COMTE DE CHAMBORD AND PHILIPPE ÉGALITÉ.

CHAM. Let me pass, Monseigneur! Your presence is hateful to me. Shadow as you are, I see you through a deeper shade. There is a mist of blood around your head.

PHIL. Probably an effect of the national razor, Sire. A second aureole of martyrdom conferred upon our family.

CHAM. Assassin of your king and kinsman! It well becomes you to thrust his title in mockery upon his heir!

PHIL. *Plus royaliste que le roi*, it seems. The good Louis has long since listened to reason. Do not disconcert him with so ridiculous a spectacle as that of an implacable grand-nephew.

CHAM. The Royal martyr was too faithful a follower of his Divine model not to have forgiven his enemies. But Monarchy does not and cannot pardon its recreant children as a monarch may forgive his treacherous kin: and as the last representative of the House of France, I can hold no converse with the worst of its enemies.

PHIL. Last representative? Nay, Sire, I cannot allow such a phrase to pass unchallenged. In the name of the Monarchy to which you have yourself appealed, I must protest against such a slight being put upon the family of Orleans.

CHAM. What? You appeal to the Monarchy in the name of your descendants? Such effrontery as that amazes me even in you. The present head of the House of Orleans——

PHIL. Is now, with submission, Sire, the heir to the crown of France. Perhaps you will hold sufficient converse with me to acknowledge that.

CHAM. If I prolong this colloquy at all, it is that I may reject that claim with all the disdain which it deserves. The heir to the crown of France, by the renunciation of his father, is Don Carlos of Spain.

PHIL. Your Majesty's chagrin at the extinction of the elder branch in France is intelligible and has my profoundest sympathy. But it betrays you into unfortunate extravagances. The claim of Don Carlos is barred by the Treaty of Utrecht, and I know that you are not of those who hold that a Spanish Royal decree could have revived it. If Spain chose to oust the heir male of Ferdinand VII. tracing from Philip V., by abolishing the Salic law, so much the worse for the heir male. It could not have re-established him in pretensions which his ancestor pledged himself to all Europe to abandon. I know,

however, that you do not rely upon diplomatic pettifoggeries of that kind. •

CHAM. No, indeed! I no more recognise the possibility of a treaty-made or treaty-marred right divine than I can admit the existence of a "constitutional title." The settlement of Utrecht could no more deprive Don Carlos of his God-conferred attribute of royalty than a vote of the French Chamber could confer it upon your son's grandson.

PHIL. No, Sire? Nor than your own recognition of my son's grandson?

CHAM. Recognition, Monseigneur! I do not understand you.

PHIL. What? Do you repudiate the arrangement of Frohsdorf? Would you undo the work of the Fusion?

CHAM. It is evident, Monseigneur, that you are the victim of some singular delusion. I know of no "arrangement of Frohsdorf," and the incident to which I suppose you to refer as "the Fusion" is strangely misdescribed by that name. I remember, indeed, a visit paid some years ago by certain descendants, lineal and collateral, of a usurping Duke of Orleans, to the heir of their lawful and unlawfully deposed sovereign; and, in obedience to the Divine command which enjoins clemency especially upon kings, I received them graciously. But I know not why this tardy act of penance for their ancestor's sin, this long-delayed renewal of



their own allegiance, should be called by such unmeaning names. The return of deserters to their flag is not usually styled "fusion," but submission; not arrangement, but atonement.

PHIL. Do you think, Sire, that the Orleanist branch of the Royalist party so understood the transaction?

CHAM. I know of no Orleanist branch of the Royalist party. The very phrase is a monstrous abuse of language. An Orleanist Royalist is as much a contradiction in terms as a Monarchical Republican. "Orleanist" is as much the name of a disloyal faction as "Bonapartist." Legitimist and Royalist are convertible terms, and not till an Orleanist discards his name to assume the former title does he acquire the right to use the latter.

PHIL. Names, I fear, have always filled too important a place in your Majesty's mind. However, I quite agree with you that Royalist and Legitimist have *now* become convertible terms, but they have become so by becoming jointly convertible with Orleanist. Mohammed has come to the mountain instead of the mountain going to Mohammed, *voilà tout!* Madame la Comtesse de Chambord has obligingly settled the question in the most conclusive manner by bearing you no children. And in *this* case of widowhood, I imagine, there is no chance of a second *enfant du miracle*. Divine Providence, indeed, has been sufficiently wasteful of

its wonders already. It was hardly worth a miracle to prolong an expiring family for a single life. But the prayer of a righteous man, and still more of a righteous woman, availeth much; and Madame la Duchesse de Berri was in every way irresistible.

CHAM. Your ribaldry, Monseigneur, is out of date. Had you lived a century later, you would have learnt that even the vilest of profligates is nowadays accustomed to render homage to decency in his talk.

PHIL. I humbly submit, Sire, to your Royal rebuke. But I shall never cease to wonder in silence at the singular futility of that latest intervention of Providence in our national affairs.

CHAM. It was the will of God, who brings low the mightiest things of earth, that the direct French line of the *Grand Monarque* should end with a prince of such a fate and history as mine.

PHIL. From Augustus to Augustulus—though, he, by the way, died fighting face to face with his foes. But I forgot, Sire, you read nothing but your "Hours." It is as you say. The French line of the *Grand Monarque* becomes extinct with you. But be comforted. You have the consolation of reflecting that the blood of Henri Quatre is still represented in the person of my own descendants. Forgive me for thinking that the lineage which thus survives is the worthier of the two.

CHAM. I can quite understand that you prefer to trace descent from Henri rather than from Louis.

PHIL. You rightly appreciate the disposition of the family. We certainly 'prefer to have sprung from the statesman who promulgated the Edict of Nantes rather than from the bigot who revoked it.

CHAM. You are at any rate the true heirs of the conqueror who trucked his religion for a crown. You yourself, Monseigneur, had none of that commodity to take to market, but you were eager in the sale of what you had—your duty as a Prince of the blood Royal, your loyalty as a subject. It was from want of skill and not of will that you failed to gain the throne you intrigued for, and which your son by a more expert employment of the paternal tactics contrived to secure. The unscrupulous statecraft of our Béarnais ancestor unquestionably survived unto the sixth and seventh generation. I doubt not that it will appear in the ninth.

PHIL. I trust so ; but your Majesty is not yourself without some of the qualities of our illustrious common ancestor. You must have been at some pains to conceal your real sentiments towards the Comte de Paris. You were wont, I believe, to speak of him almost affectionately to your friends.

CHAM. Paris had attractive qualities, and it is in my nature to respond to them ; but the Countess judged him more severely than I did ; and, warmly as my heart may have yearned towards him, my understanding too often told me that she was right.

PHIL. Your Majesty's understanding has always

needed a spiritual director, and a daughter of the Duke of Modena was especially well qualified for the purpose. But even I, you see, detested as I am, can succeed in detaining you here in converse with one whom you loaded with reproaches, and with whom you vowed you would hold no communion. Such is the fascination which has ever been exercised over you—for monarchs have the truth told to them *here*—by any stronger will than your own.

CHAM. It is not so. I do not remain in your company under any such compulsion as that. It is because, as a king and as a Christian, I repent of the hasty anger which was kindled within me on my first meeting with so treacherous and deadly an enemy of our House. Yet I know not why I should have felt wroth at the sight of one whose soul I have many and many a time commended—smile not, Monseigneur—to the intercession of our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

PHIL. Whatever be the result of your good offices, Sire, I shall always feel deeply grateful to you for them.

CHAM. Insensible as you still seem to be both to shame and to remorse, I dare not hope that they will be effectual. Ah, Monseigneur! what a heart must have been his who could consent to the death of so affectionate a cousin, so benevolent a prince, so good a man! And to think that that heart should have throbbed with the blood Royal of France!

PHIL. The affectionate cousins of the House of Orleans appear capable only of vertically transmitting their good will ; it has always declined to extend itself in a lateral direction. None of them has ever been able to instil his cousinly sentiments into his wife ; and as the wives are generally as strong as the husbands are weak, the amiable feelings entertained towards us by the latter are not very fruitful in acts.

CHAM. I know that your Queen disliked you, and that you resented the too open manifestations of her repugnance.

PHIL. I should have been foolish and ungrateful to have done any such thing. Nothing was to be feared from that woman, nothing was fatal in her, but her love. She loved her husband, and led him step by step to the guillotine. She loved her children, and condemned them to starvation and exile. She loved the Lamballe, and it was her Royal love transformed into popular hatred that fixed the favourite's head upon the pike. She even loved France, after her fashion ; and you see what she has made of that attachment.

CHAM. Nay, you have no right to reproach her memory with the misfortunes of her country ; it is indeed unworthy of your intelligence. The fate of a great empire is not determined by the levities of a thoughtless woman, however highly placed.

PHIL. It is determined by nothing according to your views, Sire, but the will of God. But I know

not why that will should deny itself the instrument of feminine spite and vanity mōre than any other of the trifles with which we are told it works. Moreover, I know not how you can regard her influence over her booby husband as an insignificant agent in events. You could not so describe the voices of the false prophets who urged the King of Israel to his doom; and Marie Antoinette was for ever bidding that ill-starred Louis to go up to Ramoth-Gilead to battle. Like Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah, she made horns for her husband—I am speaking, of course, of the Scriptural "horns of iron"—and assured him that with these should he push the Syrians of the Revolution until they were consumed.

CHAM. As a kinsman, Monseigneur, you might have dissociated the husband from the wilful wife; and as 'a subject you might have distinguished between the well-meaning monarch and his rash adviser.

PHIL. I would willingly have done so; nay, as long as it was possible, I did.

CHAM. How? You dare to say so? You who gave your vote—there is horror in the very speech of it—for the death-sentence of the Convention!

PHIL. It was then impossible to save him. It was too late.

CHAM. To save him! Ay, but not to die with him! It was not too late for that.

PHIL. No, indeed: it was too soon for that. Even

my execution, ten months later, appeared to me to be premature. And had I not voted at the trial like a good citizen of the Republic, I should probably not have secured as much respite as that.

CHAM. Was it worth the price you paid for it, Citizen D'Orleans—eternal infamy?

PHIL. The question is hardly a fair one. The Republic certainly gave me very short measure for my money; but I could not know at the time that she would drive so hard a bargain with so devoted a servant. She ought to have reflected that the world had seen no such heroic sacrifice of family affections to the command of a superior since Abraham stacked the faggots for——

CHAM. Silence, silence, in the name of human nature itself, even if you are careless of offending Heaven!

PHIL. I must trust to your Majesty's intercession in that last matter; but as to human nature, I am not careful to excuse myself for having obeyed its first instinct of self-preservation.

CHAM. Ay, the first instinct of human nature in the savage, but in him alone. In the civilised man it competes with others well-nigh as powerful as itself; in the man of gentle blood it has to wage a still more unequal struggle with the instincts of honour; in the religious man it cannot strive for a moment against the voice of God. In your own breast, Monseigneur, I know well that it had no

such adversary as this last to overcome; but at least it should have found the other two arrayed against it; and much indeed do I marvel that, dissolute, selfish, godless, as you were, you should not have been saved from complicity in the shedding of that Royal blood upon the scaffold, were it only by some single untainted drop of the blood of Henri Quatre in your veins, some single momentary stir of his chivalry in your soul.

PHIL. You marvel at that, Sire—though, indeed, a secular title of any kind appears ill matched with your saintly simplicity—you marvel at that? Your wonder is characteristic of a Bourbon of the elder branch: as characteristic as your constant appeals to that illustrious prince who in turn attracts you by his genius and shocks you with his religious indifference, and from whom you and your family would have received every one of you the requital of a hearty contempt. Has it ever occurred to you to compare the history of the two races of Bourbons that sprang from the loins of Louis XIII., and to ask yourself whether the doctrine of Divine Right, as illustrated in French history, has reason to have commended itself to the intelligence of the House of Orleans?

CHAM. No, Monseigneur; but I cannot see how, to a believer in God's holy ordinances for the government of States, the doctrine of Divine Right could possibly be affected by the comparison.



PHIL. To a believer, Sire, who has completely surrendered his intelligence to his superstitions, perhaps not; but I should think you would allow that a less robust belief might be severely tried by it. One does not, indeed, expect the Supreme Being to provide for the strict devolution of kingcraft as He provides for that of kingdoms—that is to say, according to the law of primogeniture, with limitation to issue male. One would expect that Royalty and capacity should occasionally be separated,—that the elder son should sometimes inherit the father's crown, and the younger his head: but that such separation should be invariable, that priority of birth should never be found in company with preponderance of brains, the tools of sovereignty fall never to him who could handle them—that, I confess, is an arrangement which I find it difficult to regard as Providential.

CHAM. I can understand your difficulty as a matter of theory; but I find it as difficult on my own part to recall any historical instance in which it can have practically perplexed you.

PHIL. And that, Sire, is a difficulty, which I in turn can understand. In a Bourbon of the elder branch it is thoroughly intelligible. The divorce of capacity from Royalty is never, perhaps, complete in any reigning family until its very existence escapes their detection. But you must excuse the princes of the House of Orleans, if what was

invisible to you was only too painfully evident to them.

CHAM. I regret, indeed, that the shortcomings of my family should have shaken a faith so graced by humility as yours.

PHIL. They could hardly fail to do so. Consider, Sire: between Louis XIV. and yourself you have had four ancestors on the throne of France; between his brother Philippe and the Comte de Paris, there have been six Dukes of Orleans. Was it deliberately decreed by the King of kings that, while the French crown was passing from empty head to empty head, and the sceptre from one nerveless hand to another, there should, at every demise of the sovereignty, be seen standing at the side of the new monarch—weak, corrupt, or stupid as his predecessor—a kinsman as conspicuously fitted to mount the throne as his king by Divine Right was fitted only to take his seat upon the footstool? Does your Majesty find nothing *bizarre* in that Providential scheme?

CHAM. You must first satisfy me of its fulfilment. Point out to me the personages in whom this remarkable series of contrasts was illustrated.

PHIL. Of which do you require proof, Sire? Of the vices and imbecilities of your own House, or of the abilities of mine?

CHAM. I know that some of my ancestors have been censured by foreign Republican and anti-Catholic historians; but the shining virtues of their

contemporary princes of the House of Orleans have been kept a profound secret from me.

PHIL. With many other things, Sire, which it would have profited you to know.

CHAM. Be that as it may, Monseigneur, my education has not impressed me with your conviction of the vast superiority of your ancestors to mine.

PHIL. Because your Majesty's education was in the hands of the priest and the courtier—the former of whom hates the House of Orleans for its Liberalism, and the latter of whom dared not praise the forefathers of Louis Philippe to the ears of the grandson of Charles X. But the startling contrast I have exposed to you is familiar enough to any impartial student of our history. Such an one will tell you, if you ask him, that, from the death of Louis Quatorze to the flight of Charles Dix there has been no French king who was not inferior, and but one who was not contemptibly inferior, to the Duke or Dukes of Orleans who flourished in his time. Nay, he will even tell you that by no process of chronological permutation could any one King of France be matched, save at a disadvantage, with any earlier or later representative of the younger branch. For where, I ask you, Sire, will you look among my family for a Duke of Orleans to keep in countenance the swinish Louis Quinze, or his sheepish grandson, or that grandson's mulish brother? Sensuality, imbecility, obstinacy incarnate—these were not the mere vices,

nor the mere failings, of the three Royal characters ; they were the characters themselves ? Which among us Bourbons of the *branche cadette* will you select for the comparison ? Shall it be Louis, third Duke of Orleans, the scholar and philanthropist ? Shall it be his son, my father, the munificent patron of art and letters ? Shall it even be the Regent himself, a libertine and free-thinker it is true, but an able statesman, a master of the European politics of his time ? Nay, though I ask it in all humility, shall it even be the unworthy cousin who addresses you—a man no doubt of many failings, intellectual and moral, but still, I submit, a thousand times more competent to have coped with the Revolution than that wretched distaff in the hands of a passionate and intriguing woman ?

CHAM. Let the Revolution that swept you away reply.

PHIL. Any man may be washed from the deck when incompetent hands have laid the vessel broadside to the wind. Had I ever grasped the tiller, your taunt might have been just. I claim, at any rate, to have maintained the inheritance of our superiority, and to have handed it on to my son. He was as much more capable than the deposed Charles as I was more capable than the decapitated Louis.

CHAM. You have omitted all mention, Monseigneur, of one Louis who died with his head upon his shoulders.

PHIL. Provence, indeed, deserved to carry it to his grave: for it contained all the brains of the family. Not that the addition of his two brothers' share amounted to much: but it sufficed, as you say, to keep his head on his shoulders, and not only that, but to keep his body in France. The skull so exceptionally favoured in its contents has secured its owner a mortuary residence in the family mansion of St. Denis, which is better than furnished lodgings at Goritz.

CHAM. Or at Claremont. You seem to forget that proof of the ability of your son.

PHIL. No, Sire, I do not. He failed, and he fell: but he fell by a single blunder and in a year of Revolutions. An accident overthrew, and an accident might have saved, him. But nothing could have saved the monarchy which preceded his. Its downfall had been invited and insured by a long course of stupid aristocratic and clerical tyranny—the tyranny of a prince who had learnt nothing from the execution of a brother, and forgotten nothing in years of exile, a prince impenetrable alike to the instructions of life and the exhortations of death. For I have heard that Louis Dixhuit, when his last hours were approaching, summoned the Comte d'Artois to his bedside, and, laying his hand upon your infant head, adjured the future sovereign to “do nothing that could endanger that child's inheritance.” And I have further heard that his worthy heir found no

more fitting comment to append to his subsequent description of the scene than that the admonition of his dying king and brother was "in bad taste"! Such was the creature of convention, the thing of courtly proprieties, to whom the fortunes of a great empire were to be committed.

CHAM. Enough, Monseigneur. He was my father's father, and he reared me with more than a father's tenderness. Whatever his failings as a ruler, I shall ever revere his memory.

PHIL. You are right to do so. He was a true Bourbon of the elder branch. But have I said enough, Sire, to justify my judgment on that incapable line? Or shall I follow it to Spain, and from Spain to Italy? Does it retrieve its character, in that succession of trifler, debauchee, and cuckold which disgraced the throne of Charles V., from Philip of Anjou to the puppet of Godoy, and downward to Isabella of the Holy Rose? Or in those wretched offshoots from a decrepit stock, the Parmesan dukelings, occupants of a throne as rotten as their namesake cheeses? Or in the Neapolitan Bomba, or in Francis the king of a year, fit companion for the petty princes who, at the first breath of the Revolution, came tumbling so ridiculously out of their thrones from one end of the peninsula to the other?

CHAM. I cannot defend the tyranny of Ferdinand; but he was a conscientious ruler, according to his lights. To Francis no day of grace was allowed.

The last Duke of Parma was a kindly prince, under whom the inhabitants of the duchy knew the taste of contentment better than they have ever known it under the rule of Piedmont.

PHIL. It may be so ; and the fate of so insignificant a realm is of little interest. I did but instance it to show how universal has been the repudiation of Bourbon rule : great kingdoms and small alike will none of it. And this to be said of a family sprung from the greatest ruler of his age ! Come, Sire, confess that I have justified my doubts. Acknowledge that, if it be irreverent, it is also plausible to suspect the Almighty of having settled the qualities of Henri IV. on the wrong line, and that, instead of providing for their descent to the eldest son of Louis XIII. and his descendants, He permitted them to pass entirely to the lineage of the youngest son. The wisdom, the generosity, the energy, the courage, the tolerance, the statesmanship, of Henri have never been reproduced save in the princes of the House of Orleans ; while the Bourbons of the reigning family have inherited only the insatiable egotism, the vanity and voluptuousness, the blind and narrow bigotry of Louis Quatorze.

CHAM. I listen to you, Monseigneur, without resentment, and even with a kind of painful curiosity. I am wondering whether the inheritance of your descendants includes anything else besides those family virtues which you review with such complacency.

Paris, as I have said, had engaging qualities. He had a frank address, distinguished manners, conversational charm. Under the ordeal, for such it must have been to any man of ordinary sensibility—under the ordeal of his presentation to me at Frohsdorf, he bore himself irreproachably. In point alike of duteousness and dignity, of respect and self-respect, I had to confess to myself that his demeanour did him credit. Can it really be that beneath that composed and courteous exterior he nourished the tormenting envy, the famished ambition, the passionate scorn, which you would lead me to regard as among the inseparable race-marks of the House of Orleans?

PHIL. Such envy and such ambition, Sire, could have found nothing to support them in the circumstances and prospects of the Comte de Paris. As your Majesty's heir, he had no need to envy a position to which he must ultimately succeed: and an ambition which can feed itself upon the consciousness of its certain fulfilment is not in danger of becoming famished. As to scorn, . . . well, that is another matter; but I can scarcely suppose that a man of so tolerant a temper as that of the Comte de Paris would have indulged it to the extent of a passion.

CHAM. I am deeply indebted to him for his forbearance, and I appreciate, too, the nobility of a mind which ceases to covet the possession or to



envy the possessor of what it is assured of acquiring. My cousin's magnanimity becomes the more admirable to me when I consider the conditions of its exercise. He is as satisfied with the position of heir to my sovereignty as though I were the actual occupant of a throne. One would think that I was *de facto* as well as *de jure* King of France.

PHIL. For any man of my great-grandson's ability the succession to your titular rights is enough. He will know how to wed the *factum* with the *jus*.

CHAM. You think so, Monseigneur? and indissolubly?

PHIL. Why not?

CHAM. For the best of reasons, though you, I know, will smile at the mention of it. It is because God has promised to those only whom Himself has joined that no man shall put them asunder.

PHIL. But He *will* have joined them. What else is the meaning of Divine right?

CHAM. Alas! Monseigneur! I fear it is as much beyond your comprehension as other things Divine. I have already told you that your great-grandson is not, according to the true and Heaven-sanctioned law of royal succession, the rightful heir to the crown of France. But even were that his status, it would not give him leave to ascend the throne of St. Louis, when and how, upon such conditions and with such intentions, as he may choose. So only can his Divine right be exercised as its Founder shall in His Divine

counsels have appointed ; and the counsels of Providence in that behalf are, I fear, but little likely to square with the policy of a prince of the House of Orleans.

PHIL. We have never pretended, Sire, to be as much in the secrets of the Eternal as our cousins of the elder branch ; but I venture to believe that He will permit His will to be declared to us by the course of French politics. Nor, indeed, do I know by what other means your Majesty proposes to discern the operation of His counsels. If the present rulers of France succeed in accomplishing the object on which they seem to be so intently bent—that, I mean, of disgusting their countrymen with themselves and their works—and if a ministerial *culbute* and an appeal to the people should result in a summons to my descendant to ascend the vacant throne, why may we not assume that it is Providence which has put it into the heart of a French Government to put it into the heart of France that she has had enough of the Republic and would like to make trial of a Monarchy once more ? Is it not, indeed, by this very disposition of earthly events that their Divine Disposer would in all likelihood have brought about, had He ever seen fit to do so, your own Restoration ?

CHAM. It may be so ; but on what different conditions would the offer to me have been made ? Or rather, upon what different conditions must it have been made ere I should have accepted it ? The

return of France to her earthly allegiance would then have been stamped with the Divine approval in this—that it would have signified and certified her renewal of homage to her God. I leave it to you, Monseigneur, to say whether a Restoration effected in the person of the Comte de Paris would have any significance of the kind.

PHIL. I must beg your Majesty to be a little more explicit. In what species of significance would it have been wanting?

CHAM. In the highest and best; in the only valuable kind, in the one kind which would have distinguished the miraculous conversion of a people from the accidental *bouleversement* of a political party. France under Henri V. would have been France repentant, France clothed and in her right mind, with the devil of atheism cast out of her. But France under Louis Philippe II.—

PHIL. Philippe VII. if your Majesty pleases.

CHAM. Ay? Good! it is a sign of grace at any rate, the shame to which that choice of title testifies. . . . France under Philippe VII. would still be the France of the Revolution, still the blasphemous scoffer of the Feast of Reason, still the rebel against God and the declared enemy of His Holy Church.

PHIL. I must demur to the last statement, Sire. Paris is far too shrewd a politician not to come to terms with the priests.

CHAM. He would traffic with them, perhaps, as

the Corsican did, and add hypocrisy to impiety, with the same worthless results.

PHIL. He would be Gallican, of course, in his leanings; but I see no impiety in that. There is nothing to show that the Almighty is Ultramontane.

CHAM. What, again, would be the spirit of his rule? Would not its inspiring principle be democratic as its origin? Would it not be forced to live upon the sufferance of a democracy, to subsist upon perpetual concessions to those "modern ideas" with which our late holy Father, Pius IX., in his ever-memorable encyclical, forbade us to "make terms"?

PHIL. It would, I apprehend, be a modern monarchy, and my great-grandson is a man of his time. I think I can resume the whole of your objections to it in a single phrase. It would be a monarchy of the tricolor and not of the fleur-de-lis.

CHAM. I knew it; and I can see no virtue in a Restoration which, instead of rallying the people to the royal standard, compels the monarch to do homage to the Revolutionary flag.

PHIL. Your Majesty's preferences on that point are well known. The invincible, the sacred scruple—or what was supposed to be such—which prevented you——

CHAM. What was supposed to be such? I should have thought, Monseigneur, that its sincerity was sufficiently attested by the sacrifice which it compelled.

What other motive could I have had for renouncing my ancestral throne?

PHIL. Renouncing it, Sire? By whom was it offered to you?

CHAM. By my faithful adherents, speaking as they declared, and as I firmly believed, in the name of France. The nation, I am assured, would have welcomed me as king in 1873. But even if resistance awaited me, what but loyalty to my conscience could have prevented me from striking a blow for my rights?

PHIL. Shall I tell your Majesty? To do so I must use a word which is strange to the ears of kings, and which even their cousins—unless, like me, they are made the mark of accursed calumny—were seldom doomed to hear. *You were afraid.*

CHAM. You lie!

PHIL. Your own conscience flings you back the word! Henri, Comte de Chambord, king without a crown, and pretender without a sword! It was not the voice of duty that held you motionless within sight of the goal of your ambition; it was the whisper of fear! Scruple was silent until the hour of action struck. It was not till then that the world heard first of the indispensable lilies, and of the white plume—in English “plume” and “feather” are the same—of Henri of Navarre.

CHAM. You dare to——

PHIL. I dare to give voice to your own unspoken

thoughts. Again I say, yqur conscience is my witness that I speak the truth.

CHAM. May the tongue that has uttered so foul a slander . . . But no, I dare not! What if it *be* the truth? Thou, God, who readest hearts, interpret to me my own! My conscience—he said well—my conscience—let me hear it, let me obey it . . . even though it speak to me through those polluted lips!

PHIL. Once more I repeat that. . . . He mutters to himself! The imbecile is praying! *Dieu de Dieu!* That a head so fit for the biretta should have been born to a crown!

## VIII

### PLATO AND LANDOR

PLA. Say no more, my friend. I have long forgiven you the affront.

LAN. Forgiven me! . . . Zounds! I must correct him in that. I will submit to no such indignity even in Elysium. . . . You have misunderstood me, O Plato. I asked no forgiveness for anything I have written concerning you. What I have just said was meant but to assure you that, poorly as I think of your dialogues, I bear you no personal ill will.

PLA. I never provoked the ill will of any one; and as to my writings, I am indifferent to the opinion of a barbarian.

LAN. That was well said, and I take no offence at it. As a Greek, you would naturally despise my judgment on such a matter; and I, as an Englishman should despise you if you pretended to defer to it. I lived my whole life among men who were barbarians to *me*, and I never stooped to solicit their suffrages.

PLA. Barbarians to you, a barbarian? You speak in riddles. But stay! I remember. I have heard men talk of you as a Greek.

LAN. "Born out of due time." An inapt expression, to my thinking, borrowed without much attention to propriety from St. Paul.

PLA. How is it inapt? It seems to me appropriate.

LAN. The Greek spirit is immortal, and no man's birth into its service can be an anachronism. A Greek cannot be born out of due time; but he can be born dishonourably out of due place, saving your presence: and that was the case with me.

PLA. You seem, then, to be bringing a charge against your country rather than your times. In what respect, O exile from Hellas, were your countrymen barbarians?

LAN. Do not, I entreat you, indulge in satire. It is the one form of intellectual energy to which your genius seems to have been least adapted. Nothing, as I have already told you, can be more frigid than the raillery of your *Dialogues*.

PLA. Let me ask you, then, without satire, in what respect were your countrymen more barbarian than yourself?

LAN. In every element of distinction between barbarism and culture. One-half of them were Persians in everything but the taste for philosophy, the other half Scythians in every habit but that of nomadism. Pleasure was the sole pursuit of the one, and pursuit the only pleasure of the other.

PLA. Surely, my friend, you are describing them



—these last, at any rate—in the language of metaphor.

LAN. Not at all, I assure you. The English country gentleman does not dwell indeed, in a wheeled house, or drink mare's milk ; but for the destruction of life, or the endurance of fatigue, I would match him against the toughest Scythian hunter that ever cooled his dusty feet in the Tanais.

PLA. That your countrymen are of a more ~~than~~ Persian luxury I can believe. I have heard as much, indeed, in converse with those of them who have most lately joined us. But they are no longer as tasteless in their profusion as they were wont to be. So, at least, I am informed.

LAN. Your witnesses must have been fortunate in their experience, then, or you unfortunate in their incompetence. My own inquiries confirm me in a directly contrary belief.

PLA. Of whom, then, have you inquired ? I have again and again been told that the literature of Athens was never so assiduously studied, nor its art so ardently beloved, as among your countrymen to-day.

LAN. Pedants and dilettanti we had always with us. We were never to seek in the learning of Greek particles ; and as for our love of Greek art, we proved it long ago by a sincerer flattery than even that of imitation.

PLA. You mean by——

LAN. I mean by spoliation. Our passion for Athenian marbles is, at any rate, indisputable. We are collectors of them as Cacus was a collector of oxen. But it is more than ninety years since we did homage to Athene by pillaging the Parthenon, and I may well ask for some newer examples of our Hellenic enthusiasm.

PLA. You seem to be ill acquainted with the latest changes which the manners of your country have undergone. The language of Athens, they tell me, is no longer the study of the scholar alone, nor the monuments of ancient Greece his exclusive care. An explorer of the vestiges of our earliest history is greatly honoured by your whole people. Not only, again, do they study the Athenian drama, but they endeavour to represent it. Do you not know that both the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus and the *Ajax* of Sophocles have been brought by them upon the scene?

LAN. I do not know it ; but I doubt whether *you* can have heard of their last piece of masquerading in this kind. You have? Then what think you of it? Aha! You are confused.

PLA. I do not understand you.

LAN. I suspect you understand me but too readily! Some years ago, my countrymen corrupted the political education of their youth with a scenic representation of Homer.

PLA. Your merriment is incomprehensible to me. I have nothing to unsay in my teachings.

LAN. Of course not. What philosopher ever had?

PLA. I think the same of the poetic mythology as I ever did ; but from all I can learn of this people of yours it would be impossible for them to stray further from the paths which I marked out in my *Politica* than they do at present.

LAN. There, by Jove, you are right. Gold, silver, brass ; Rulers, Guardians, Producers, they have all wandered pretty far a-field. But excuse me ~~to~~ I decline a discussion on this subject. I have written enough about it to offend you already.

PLA. Be it so. But whatever the vices of the Homeric gods and heroes, you will admit, I suppose, that those who represent their doings in the dramatic form intend to do honour to Homer. Or shall we say that . . .

LAN. No, let us not say so. I know what this style portends, and I beg you will spare yourself the trouble of these elaborate preparations. I am no sophist to need all the dialectical bird-lime you are for spreading in my path. On the contrary, I will walk without ado into any trap you please to set for me.

PLA. I say, then, that these barbarian choragi seem to be seeking in quite a new fashion to do honour to the poetry of Greece. Neither, as I hear, are they pedants or triflers who distribute the parts and teach the chorus at these shows. It is the pure charm of Greek poetry which must have attracted them.

LAN. Yes, or a sense of the picturesque in Greek costume ; that seems to me motive enough from the artistic point of view. But the women would take care that that element of the matter was not neglected.

PLA. The women ?

LAN. Oh, I was forgetting ; you are, perhaps, unprepared for such a scandal. The female parts in these Homeric tableaux are usually performed by women, the wives and daughters of the actors. . . . Compose yourself ; I will not pursue the painful subject further. But you may now, perhaps, begin to doubt whether the beauties which the performance was designed to exhibit were those of Homer.

PLA. The chief beauty of Homer is undraped simplicity.

LAN. So it is of the Homeric damsels, I am told, at these representations. I can understand the Hellenic enthusiasm of young and pretty women, and their devotion to a cause in which a graceful figure may be so effectively and liberally displayed. Upon them, no doubt, the performance exercises a most improving effect. The drama, however, is meant to educate, not those who act in it, but those who witness it.

PLA. And are not the benches crowded with applauding spectators ?

LAN. What if they are ? You know not the nation of whom you are speaking ; or, rather, you are unaware that you are not now speaking of any "nation"

at all: no more than I should speak of Poseidon if I were to say Aphrodite. The ocean of our Democracy is unfathomed, and these idlers are but the foam on its surface.

PLA. But are not the tastes of your wealthy and cultivated citizens an index to the tendencies of the whole people?

LAN. For the sake of your illusions, I hope not; for if so, the tendency of the whole people is towards a most contemptible levity.

PLA. Yet the studies of which we have been speaking appear to me to be serious.

LAN. Serious studies may be pursued in a frivolous spirit; and they are, so when they are taken up as a mere relief from more honest and undisguised frivolities.

PLA. And is it only thus that your wealthy citizens are studying the poetry and drama of Greece?

LAN. The poetry and drama of Greece take their turn in our world of fashion with the latest singer, the latest traveller, the latest murderer; and they will be thrown aside in their turn for some newer novelty of vacuous minds.

PLA. I am persuaded, my friend, that you think too ill of your country and its manners. You judge of it from your own remembrance of it alone. But do you find no change for the better in those among your countrymen who have the most lately joined us here? Do you not find them more studious

of the things of the mind than they were wont to be?

LAN. Of what things of the mind? Of those which relate to science or to art? If to science, yes. But I thought we were speaking of art.

PLA. We are, and it was art I meant.

LAN. Then, no; I cannot say so. I have found it quite otherwise.

PLA. What! Do they not send us more poets? Do they not send us more painters?

LAN. Ay, truly; they send us any number—and all of them immortal. It is true they are a little difficult to distinguish from each other. The poets seem to have written all their poems with a paint-brush, and the painters were apparently unable to complete their pictures without the pen. But what has this to do with the things of the mind?

PLA. Much, surely; unless poetry and art among you have ceased to be an exercise of the faculties according to a law of right reason. Have they?

LAN. I would rather let the painters answer for themselves. But as for the poets, I do not feel justified in associating the name of reason with many of their performances; nor, exceptions excepted, can I even think of them in connection with the idea of "law."

PLA. Do you mean that they reject the supreme authority of reason as a guide and moderator in their compositions?

LAN. I mean that they not only reject but insult it. A poem by one of these poets is either a riot of the imagination or a mutiny of the passions ; and Reason would present herself there with as much rashness as an unpopular magistrate at a tumult among the cobblers. They would pelt her from the scene with rotten adjectives.

PLA. You are, indeed, describing a lawless and licentious class of men. Q

LAN. In matters of art they profess to be, as they call it, a "law unto themselves:" a pretension than which none could be more alien from the orderly and reverent spirit of the Greek.

PLA. No, indeed. And yet your account of these men surprises me ; for I had heard that the chief of your surviving poets has rivalled the greatest of our own poets in the tragic drama.

LAN. It is true, and of him I would fain say nothing. I had his reverence, and he has my admiration. However widely he may seem to have departed of late, and in some of his compositions, from the antique model, his genius will bring him back again in the end. It is of others—others of a newer and weaker school than he—that I have been speaking.

PLA. Yet even these express reverence for Greek art and for the Greek spirit, and, I doubt not, feel it.

LAN. It is impossible, O Plato, that you can have met any of them, or you would never think so.

PLA. Nay, I have been in their company more than once.

LAN. And failed to convict them of imposture? . . . Perhaps, then, it *was* all Socrates. There may be something in the Boswell theory of the Platonic *Dialogues* after all.

PLA. I cannot hear what you are saying.

LAN. I was merely repeating to myself a passage from one of the Homeric hymns. But let us return to these friends of ours. I shall for ever remember my first encounter with one of the tribe. Shall I relate it to you?

PLA. It would greatly interest me to hear it.

LAN. He had just landed at the wharf among a boat-load of (apparently) his admirers. Dis and Persephone! What countenances! Never can Father Charon have ferried over so woe-begone a crew. I felt sorry for the worthy old man, he seemed so dispirited by his company. But the passengers were nothing to their *coruphaioi*.

PLA. What, then, was the aspect of the man?

LAN. It would need the genius of an Aristophanes and his vocabulary—to do justice to it. He was of about the middle height, but reduced below it by a stoop. The length of his hair might have proclaimed him a Spartan, were it not that one saw he could have come of no race which follows the practice of exposing its sickly children. His visage was long even to prolixity; his mouth semihiant and



unalterably sad. He had the eyes of a dolphin and the legs of a Strymonian crane.

PLA. Apotropaian Apollo! Avert the omen! And you, my friend, refrain from unlucky words! What should this portent threaten?

LAN. Nothing worse than tediousness; reassure yourself. I approached and greeted the new-comer, mentioning to him my name. He said he had passionately longed to see me; and he looked, indeed, as if he had been passionately longing for something. But he added that he was glad to see me; and he did not look as if he was glad of anything.

PLA. What was the 'cause of his melancholy?

LAN. He was lamenting that there should be no better bread than can be made with wheat. Ah! I see you do not know them. These men, O Plato, are perpetually bewailing the shortness of human life, and saying unkind things about death; protesting against that cosmic sadness which they are continually hugging to their hearts, and complaining of the shortness of those pleasures which they seem to enjoy like a stomach-ache.

PLA. This is a strange condition of mind which you describe. Death, we know, is a terror to the vulgar, and pleasures are unsatisfying to those who pursue nothing else. But the wise man is above both fear of the one and care for the other.

LAN. The wise man? Yes; but no one ever

thought that these men had any philosophy to support them. But of what use to them is art—art of which the end is joy? These men to call themselves Greeks! Is it Greek to be for ever pulling a long face at Pan, and begging him to leave his piping and answer riddles? Is it Greek to have no sense of a soul of immortal gladness in all things? Greek, to whine eternally over human destiny and clamour fretfully to the Powers who have ordained it?

PLA. These young men seem, indeed, to have little reverence for the gods.

LAN. They reverence nothing. They have neither that nor any other quality of those Greeks of whom they prate. Their minds are—but why speak of their minds? Their art itself exposes them for pretenders. For what were the chief virtues of the art of Athens in its greatest period? Were they not simplicity, manliness, repose, reserve?

PLA. You are right, my friend. I should so enumerate them.

LAN. Then how stand the writings of our pseudo-Hellenes as regards these qualities? Let us have done with their poetry. Do you know their prose?

PLA. Nay, how should I know it?

LAN. How? Did you not say that you had conversed with some of these men?

PLA. Yes.

LAN. Then you have heard their prose. You cannot have escaped it. What did you think of it?

PLA. It certainly seemed to me to be wanting in moderation.

LAN. Moderation? Never in the history of literature has there arisen so dissolute a prose. Luxurious excess, a supra-feminine love of softness and splendour, is its inseparable and predominant mark.

PLA. They claim, however, to show taste and discrimination in the adornment of their writings.

LAN. They do: and I allow their claim. But what then? Having discovered new dyes, and having acquired new cunning in the beautiful arrangement of colours, they fail to see that an inordinate passion for the kind of pleasure which such arrangements give is in itself a sin against the continence of Art. A Persian grandee was probably a beautiful sight enough; but if a satrap of Xerxes had apparelled himself as these men bedizen their prose, the king would have beheaded him for his effeminacy.

PLA. You easily dispose, then, of their claim to one of the virtues you have mentioned. They are wanting in manliness.

LAN. They are; and in the simplicity which is seldom found apart from it. As for repose, how in the world can a man remain at rest who is for ever longing to draw attention to the grace of his attitude or the lace of his tunic?

PLA. There is still the virtue of reserve.

LAN. Reserve is restraint, and restraint is painful

and pain is intolerable to the self-indulgent. When did one of these men ever deny his senses the pleasure of a glowing epithet, however more appropriate would have been a colourless and neutral word?

PLA. I cannot, indeed, approve of their manner of discoursing either upon the painter's or upon the sculptor's art.

LAN. Men cannot discourse fitly upon one matter when they are thinking of another; and these men compose their dissertations not so much to set forth their subject as to display themselves. But it is not from vanity alone that they neglect to castigate their style. An over-coloured diction is the natural product of a too sensuous imagery, and with this they indulge themselves rather for their own gratification than for that of their readers.

PLA. But do they not understand that in this pleasure, as in all others, they should observe a rule of temperance?

LAN. No doubt they do, like all other voluptuaries; but they are the least fitted of all men, both in spirit and in training, to resist this species of temptation. They may fancy themselves Greeks to their hearts' content; but in truth they can trace no descent from classical antiquity at all. They are the late-born children of the Renaissance, and their only real affinities are with the thoughts, the passions, and the foibles of that unrepentful time. Whatever

sincerity there is in them displays itself only in their sympathy with its art, its poetry, its ideas. Their Hellenism is a sham product, redolent of that modern and modish suburb in which most of its festivals are held.

PLA. But was there not formerly among you a more sincere culture study of the poetic models of my language? I have heard your countrymen speak of certain older poems inscribed *Hellenica*.

LAN. Indeed? Then they are better known in the nether world than upon earth. And what, O Plato, was the report of them?

PLA. That life alone was wanting to their beauty; but that, lacking life, they could not without a paradox be credited with the promise of immortality.

LAN. I need not ask you who said that. I could trace the vapid epigram to a hundred flippant tongues. I doubt not that there were coxcombs who pointed the same dull jest at the Zeus of Phidias. None are so ready to award or deny the palm of immortality to others as those whose wits have rotted before their death. And, pray, what more did they say of me?

PLA. Of you, my friend? Was it you, then, who composed the poems of which I spoke? Had I known it, I would have gone more circumspectly. The writings of poets are like children, whose uncomely features are not to be spoken of but with reserve to their parents.

LAN. The simulation of ignorance as a cloak for insult is a modern refinement of malice, and I would never impute it to the courtesy of a Greek, and still less to the gravity of a philosopher. The poems of which you spoke, O Plato, were my own. They may well have been unworthy of your approbation, but, believe me, they were far less so than their censors.

PLA. You are acquainted, then, it seems, with those who condemned your poems.

LAN. Intimately. Their names were Envy, Ignorance, and Vulgarity, three closely allied enemies of every worthy work and workman in art or letters ; and in a semi-barbarous society like that of England all other voices are drowned by theirs. I was well aware that in my own lifetime—— But why pursue this subject ? It is repugnant to me to speak of myself and of my labours ; and especially so when speech may be mistaken for protest against a judgment which I never recognised, and appeal from a tribunal before which I refused to plead. Let us rather speak of the writings of my successors, and of those among them—for there are some such, I admit—who have striven to preach the Hellenic worship of perfection to the benighted Scythians and Persians of my rudely luxurious land.

PLA. Have there, then, been other *Hellenica* produced among you ?

LAN. Your question proves to me, O Plato, that

you mistook the purpose of my poems, and lent, perhaps, too ready an ear on that account to the fribbles who condemned them. A direct and avowed imitation of Greek models in a modern tongue can never be more than an elegant exercise of ingenuity. As such, it may succeed or fail. It may simulate life with more or less of cunning—though it will always seem inanimate to those who must be bawled at before they hear, and pummelled to make them feel. It may catch the happy union of the beautiful with the chaste—though its purity will always seem insipid to those who find in the raddled cheek of the courtesan their only ideal of beauty. But it can never live with the life or thrill with the passion of the present; and it is not by such exercises of the literary handicraft that the example of Hellas can be made helpful and inspiring to a modern literature.

PLA. How, then, would you call it to your aid?

LAN. A certain priest of our religion has told us that the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. It is by informing the ideas, the imagery, the expression of the moderns with the Hellenic spirit; it is by cultivating the Hellenic passion for symmetry and balance, the Hellenic pride in continence and self-restraint, the Hellenic delight in pure beauty of form, and the Hellenic contempt for the glare of colour, that the elevation of our literature is to be compassed; and there was one in pre-eminence by whom this excellent work has been greatly advanced.

PLA. In poetry, or in what other species of composition ?

LAN. In poetry for the most part, though he has endeavoured with less success to inculcate in his prose the precepts which he practises in verse. Has any one ever spoken to you of the *Strayed Reveller* or of *Empedocles on Etna* ?

PLA. I do not recall those titles ; but I have heard many such as a prelude to recitations, together with others far less familiar to me as a Greek than the name of the Sicilian philosopher. I am indebted, indeed, to your poets for having enabled me to make the acquaintance of not a few personages famous, it would seem, among the men of your own day, but completely unknown in mine.

LAN. The poet, however, whom I am praising was not one of those who seek to gain a character for erudition by the choice of obscure subjects. He was endowed, moreover, with that saving gift of humour which, though it does not indeed save men from vanity, yet insures them against its more ridiculous excesses.

PLA. But are not these poems of your countrymen direct imitations of Hellenic models ? The title of one of them would lead me to suppose so, and did you not just now speak of such compositions as profitless exercises of the ingenuity ?

LAN. They are not, however, of that description. Neither in scheme nor treatment can they be traced



to any antique original. For their subject and their scene alone is their author a borrower from the legend or the history of your race ; since the spirit which pervades them is not among those possessions of mankind which can be lent or borrowed. It must be imbibed as of native right, or as the privilege of the naturalised ; and to those only is it vivifying to whom the grace of Apollo has granted the spiritual franchise of your soil. There is no "borrowing of the Greek spirit," as some men loosely phrase it, for any but these adoptive sons of Hellas. As well might one believe that the inspiration of Castaly could have been brought down to the dwellers at the foot of Parnassus by any one who chose to dip an amphora in the chance-discovered spring. For those alone were its waters magical whom the god had guided thither up the devious mountain-paths and through the blinding thickets to bend knees of reverence upon its marge and to touch its sacred surface with prayerful lips.

PLA. Has the poet of whom you speak been indeed so highly favoured ? Does he really sing as one who has drunk of the fountain of the Muses ?

LAN. His poetry is instinct with the grace and soothes us with the repose of your most perfect art ; and though in form it is chastened to the utmost severity of the statuesque, there can be few—and I should despise them—who have ever found it cold.

PLA. By Zeus, my friend, it would almost seem

as if the poets of Hellas might well have gone to school to the barbarians whom you thus extol.

LAN. You are again, O Plato, unhappy in your irony. The Greek of antiquity has mastered the secret of perfection in literary form; and in one department of thought—the philosophic—we can add little or nothing to the work which he has accomplished. But in all else—in the interpretation of human affairs, in the ordering and elucidation of the facts of nature, and in the deeper analysis of human feeling—the cultivated modern might, indeed, throw open a school to receive him. I would have you to know that in these things the most learned and highest endowed Greek of antiquity would be a child in our hands.

PLA. I cannot restrain my surprise, that a race whom you only lately pronounced to be barbarians should produce such a paragon of taste and culture. How comes it that he has not Hellenised his countrymen? or has he been so satisfied with the contemplation of his own excellences as never to have attempted it?

LAN. As a teacher I own he has been less successful. The qualities in which he shone as a poet appeared somewhat to fail him when he descended—or ascended, one would say with more propriety—from practice to precept.

PLA. I am now, my friend, in very truth perplexed. It is, indeed, incomprehensible to me that one of those

to whom you have bidden me go to school should lack the aptitude for teaching. Such a misfortune as that can rarely have befallen so highly qualified an instructor.

LAN. The hit is a fair one ; and I allow that there was some want of prudence in my mode of meeting your challenge, or at least in the particular form of words in which I accepted it. But you do not need to be told, of course, that the most accomplished of artists is not always the ablest of teachers ; and the most classic of our poets assuredly gives testimony to that truth.

PLA. Wherein, then, does he fail as a teacher ?

LAN. I cannot better answer that question than by recalling your admired reply to the censure of Diogenes. Stamping rudely upon the carpet of Eastern fabric with which the floor of your abode was covered, "Thus," cried the Cynic, "do I tread upon your pride, O Plato." "And with greater pride, O Diogenes!" was your just and dignified retort. In pronouncing judgment upon the faults of his countrymen, our apostle of culture has too often merited a like rebuke. In his descriptions of himself as a modest seeker after truth, there is something too much of the pride that apes humility. He praises the noble *naïveté* of the "grand manner" in language which seems a little too conscious of its own elegance ; and he preaches simplicity in a style which is by no means free from affectation. That grace of the nude

which distinguishes his imaginative work gives place in his criticism to a picturesque, but too minutely studied, arrangement of drapery; and while his poetry has always affected me with the charm of pure English, I often find it hard to tolerate the Gallicisms of his prose.

PLA. I hope, however, that these defects are not serious enough to reduce him even as a prose-writer to the level of those whom you have been describing. So great an inferiority to himself as a poet would make one doubt whether he had really drunk of the sacred spring.

LAN. If that is your only doubt, you may dismiss it. Compared with the posture-makers of whom I have spoken, his worst affectations are simplicity itself. He has, as I have assured you, the root of the matter. His Hellenism is a living reality; theirs, I repeat, is a sham.

PLA. Why, then, is its falsity not detected? Have you no recognised standard of excellence, no immutable tests of truth in the poet's work, and in all other work?

LAN. No; we have neither these nor the desire for them, nor the belief in them. You called me a barbarian just now, and I applauded you. Do not imagine from that that I take the Athenian at his own valuation; it is the calm assurance of its accuracy, the haughty confidence of Athens in the absolute perfection of her models, in the eternal

sufficiency of her standards, which I admire. Given that confidence, she needed only to place her models and standards under the charge of faithful custodians who protected the one from mutilation and the other from debasement.

PLA. There, my friend, you are in error. We had no such officers at Athens. The models and standards of which you speak were guarded, even as they were approved and adjusted, by the citizens themselves.

LAN. And they, O Plato, were the custodians of whom I spoke. In a small community, favoured alike by nature and institutions, it might well be so. The climate of Attica gave brightness to the mind of the Athenian; his polity provided him with education, his slaves with leisure. It is little wonder and no mighty credit to him that he should have duly profited by such a concourse of advantages. He did so profit by it, and the invisible canon of excellence in art and letters, found, therefore, as safe a depository in the bosom of the citizen as the legal standards of weight in the coffers of the Acropolis. But if the State at large was your tribunal of experts, so much the better for you. At any rate, you let none but the properly qualified ascend the judgment-seat, and the barbarian in mind, if not content with a place on the benches, would have struggled with the ushers in vain.

PLA. You surprise me. In what other art or

handicraft among your people, does the worker submit himself to the judgment of the ignorant?

LAN. In what art or handicraft does he not? In the greatest of all arts he certainly does. In politics we have long since shaken off the tyranny of competence, and to-day in my country any man is a political expert who has clergy enough to make a cross on a ballot-paper.

PLA. How, then, does your State subsist?

LAN. By the grace of the gods. The English democracy is the most remarkable in the world. It is at once the strongest and the weakest, the fiercest and the tamest, the least instructed in the learning of books and the most highly trained in the discipline of life. None was ever so studious of liberty yet so submissive to control; none so angrily intolerant of remediable hardships and yet so sanely and so nobly patient under those which nature has imposed.

PLA. To what is this happy balance of their tendencies to be referred?

LAN. I know not. I know only that it exists, and that the unbroken tranquillity of our country attests it. The subversive impulses of this people are the superficial ones: their conservative instincts lie deeper; but we know that they must be there. Westward through the Hellespont, and eastward through the Pillars of Heracles, the surface-currents both from the Euxine and from the Atlantic pour

perpetually into the Midland Sea ; but the waters of its basin keep their bounds, and they must needs, therefore, be depleted, through one channel or the other, by the back-set of some deeper-flowing stream. Even so is it with the democracy of England. It is for ever being fed full through the twofold inlet of Teaching and Circumstance ; yet the shores of our society remain unwasted, and the rocks of our Constitution still lift their heads above the waves.

PLA. Among such a people there must be some inbred principle of obedience, and it should be easy to educate them to perceive what is beautiful as well as what is just.

LAN. The fault is not in the nation, but in its circumstances. It is as docile in its tastes as in its politics, but there are none to direct it in either. Wealth and luxury have debauched one set of guides, as faction and ambition have corrupted the other.

PLA. Whom, then, do you call their guides in matters concerning the Beautiful ?

LAN. The rich, the highly placed, and the leisured among their fellow-citizens.

PLA. But do not these require teaching themselves in order to know what to study and admire ?

LAN. They do, and they are unteachable : there is the whole mischief.

PLA. To the former, the wealthy class, you surely do injustice. Their very willingness to be led in this matter of Hellenic studies is a proof that you

do. To show such willingness is to have already gone half-way towards perception of the Beautiful.

LAN. Let us join them, O Plato, in devoting Ajax the son of Telamon to the Eumenides. For no man ever destroyed so many potential percipients of the Beautiful in a single day.

PLA. Among the Trojans?

LAN. No, among the sheep, who surpass all other animals in willingness to be led. If docility to guidance is to serve for an augury of future taste, it must at least be intelligent. A blind and blatant scurrying in one another's footsteps gives no more promise of capacity in the human than in the ovine species; and I deem it no matter of boasting for the silly troop that they have been started by the chatter of some coxcomb, instead of by the jingling of a wether's bell.

PLA. But if, then, my friend, you find your countrymen so unteachable in the humane life, would it not be better to abandon the attempt? Other nations will be found to hand on the torch of Hellas, if yours should lose the honour of the office.

LAN. Yet it is this office before all others which I have coveted for her; it is for a service such as this that I would have her remembered by the future world.

PLA. It is not in the power of all nations to preserve their memory among those that come after them. Many great empires have passed away from the earth without leaving any trace behind.



LAN. So will not ours. Most widely, O Plato, have you missed my meaning ; except for courtesy, I should smile at your mistake. The name and the works of England will endure as long as those of Hellas and of the conqueror of Hellas, whom, with no unwarranted self-praise, we boast ourselves to resemble. England has given laws to a dominion wider even than that of Rome, and has spread her language and her customs among millions over whom the Roman eagles never soared. She has "imposed the wont of peace" upon I know not how many savage or divided races, and its arts and virtues have sprung up in a hundred regions heretofore unfriendly to them, under the shadow of her shield.

PLA. Why, then, are you not content with these titles to the remembrance of mankind ?

LAN. Because they are too splendid for any nation to remain content with. Achievements as great as ours have never failed to leave behind them aspirations vaster than themselves. Those who have surpassed the work of the Roman may well be fired with the ambition to rival that of the Greek. Moreover, you should remember, O Plato, that in proportion to our control over the destinies of mankind, is our debt to the human mind and soul. At present, however, we are in no way to discharge it. I own, indeed, that when I measure in imagination the span of our conquests, I am unable to rejoice over the wealth of outward prosperity which they have

conferred ; for I can think only of their tremendous deductions from the aggrégate of inward happiness throughout the world.

PLA. Deductions! You surely can only mean that they have not increased it.

LAN. Not so; they have diminished it. Wheresoever in the world a people has passed under the sway of England, their lives, in becoming more abundant, have ceased to satisfy their ideals. We have broken in upon the secular calm of ancient and outworn civilisations, and over minds which once reposed in a passive and incurious contentment we have cast the spell of our own unsatisfied longings. The savage whom we tame unlearns his simple delight in Nature, and gains access only to our coarser and viler pleasures in its stead. We have peopled one whole continent with our lank-jawed kinsmen, and fringed another with the careworn faces of our sons. A full half of the globe's surface is given over to the melancholy Englishman—with his sombre attire, his repellent manners, his gloomy worship, his mechanic habitudes of toil. The human instinct of self-preservation will not long tolerate such a dominion as this ; the human yearning after gladness will rise up in rebellion against it, and we are bound therefore in common prudence to seek the Hellenic spirit and ensue it, reverently striving, if haply it may admit us to its inspiring visions of the beautiful, and yield up to us the secret of its immortal joy.

## IX

### PETER THE GREAT AND ALEXANDER II

PET. Ho! Old Charon! Whom, in the name of the Furies, bringst thou hither? What woe-begone and terror-stricken wretch wouldst thou pass off upon me for kin of mine? This the blood of the Roman-offs! . . . Come, speak thou! Speak for thyself! What is thy name?

ALEX. Alexander Nicolaevitch.

PET. By Peter and Paul, it is he! The son of Nicolas Paulovitch—that right strong Czar and proper man. What a branch from such a tree! Hum! . . . I doubt . . . I doubt. Tell me, thou, for I have forgotten, Who was thy mother?

ALEX. The Princess Charlotte of Hohenzollern.

PET. Ha! I know nothing against her—nothing. Yet I would to God I did. It should be the son of some silken chamberlain who comes thus trembling to the Shades. Have the Czars of Russia indeed grown such cowards in the face of death?

ALEX. No, No! . . . your pardon . . . it is not death . . . not death itself . . . but . . . but . . . the

manner of it . . . So swift, so strange, so terrible! Have you not heard, my father?

PET. Heard! Not I. It is long since I have sought reports from Russia. They enrage me too much. But one told me yesterday thou wast coming hither, and I came to meet thee.

ALEX. Yesterday! yesterday! . . . But it was to-day, this very day that they—that I . . . From whom did you hear this?

PET. From one Solovieff, a fellow-countryman of ours.

ALEX. Solovieff! the man I sent before me, two years ago. And *he* knew—*he* knew what my accursed police on earth were too blind or slothful to discover.

PET. Oh, the fellow wants not for news. Fresh batches of friends from the upper world appear to join him every day. They come by boat-loads at a time.

ALEX. Nihilists and suspects of Nihilism! The shipments of Drenteln and Melikoff . . . And to think that with all this they could not save my life!

PET. Speak out, mutterer, in the name of all the devils! What was this swift, and strange, and terrible death of thine?

ALEX. I was cut off in a moment, and by violence.

PET. Hum! ha! an assassination . . . Swift enough, I doubt not: but—strange you call it? Then times must have changed in Russia, or else the customs of

our imperial house. The death thou makest all this coil about was good enough for thy grandfather, and for *his* father, Peter III. But tell me, what brought thee to the scarf?

ALEX. To the scarf? Nay, sir, you are indeed at fault. The Czars of these days die not by the scarf, but by the bombshell.

PET. The bombshell! Thy death, then, was in battle? Holy St. Vladimir! that a Czar of Russia should find aught of "strange" or "terrible" in such a fate! How will my great enemy the Swedish king, he who himself so fell at Friedrichshall, deride me! A Czar, and afraid to——

ALEX. Indeed, sir, your reproaches are unjust. Mine was no death in battle. I fell by the hand of the assassin in the streets of Petersburg.

PET. What! *Outside* the palace! Conspiracy grows bold indeed. Who, pray, were the plotters?—Orloffs? Galitzins? Dolgoroukis? let me hear their names. Was thy son among them? Had the Czarovitch a hand in it? Nay, I'll warrant he had. Ah! fool, fool! A Czar who watches not his son deserves his death.

ALEX. You wrong the son no less than the father, and as to our nobles, their plots are no longer those of the palace.

PET. What! Neither Czarovitch nor Grand Duke nor noble at the bottom of such a deed as this? Now the saints grant me patience! Thou wilt not

tell me that a Czar of All the Russias has been slain by a nobody.

ALEX. Alas! my father, I would it were so. Better so than that the name of our enemy should be Everybody, and Everywhere his abode.

PET. Thy talk is strange, Alexander Nicolaevitch . . . I would hear more of this tremendous foe of thine.

ALEX. I know not that there is more to say. It is all that my police could ever succeed in finding out. My secret enemy was everywhere—from the capital of my empire to its remotest confines. No place was so near but that he dared to risk himself in it; no spot so distant but that he hoped to reach me from it. In the ante-chamber of the courtier, in the hut of the peasant, in the barrack-room of the soldier, in the study of the professor, nay, upon the judgment-seat of the judge, was my enemy to be found.

PET. Stay! Is this the new madness that I have heard of now and again from those few with whom I have had the patience to talk of Russia? Is it . . . is it . . . how call they the frenzy? Is it Nihilism?

ALEX. Even so, my father. It is indeed that fearful scourge of our race and nation whereof you have heard. It was by Nihilists that I was slain.

PET. Then, by God, thou art rightly served; and the fellows did well to blow thee out of the world to make room for a better.

ALEX. Rightly served!

PET. Ay! for the crazè is ten years old at the least, and a Czar who cannot teach or unteach his people what he wills in that time, had best hand the crown over to another and go a-hunting.

ALEX. I strove, my father, God knows with what patience, to purge my people of the poison.

PET. To purge them! to purge them! Ay, that is easily said; and any quack understands how to do it—after his fashion. But what purges didst thou use? The leaden boluses, I will engage. Thou gavest the poor devils a war. It was thy great-grandmother's recipe, and may serve well enough for some kinds of inflammation, but not this, I doubt, not this.

ALEX. Sir, we are not so un-Christian in these latter days as to make war abroad for reasons of state at home. But . . . but . . . it did so befall that a war broke out. Divine Providence ordained that a righteous quarrel should arise between ourselves as the protector of the Holy Church and the Ottoman Porte.

PET. Divine Providence befriended Catherine the Great in the same manner; and rewarded her for her instant obedience to the heavenly summons with the gift of the Crimea. What did you get for your championship of the sacred cause?

ALEX. Eastern Bessarabia and a strip of Armenia.

PET. Ha! Is that all? Either the Czars, then,

are less strenuous servants of God than they were wont to be, or the service itself is a worse one. But what of your people at home? Did the blood-letting pacify them?

ALEX. Alas! no, sir. The fever of disaffection became more acute than ever.

PET. Did I not tell thee that I doubted the treatment? But to give it a chance it must be used as thoroughly as Catherine used it. Didst thou take too little blood from the patient, peradventure?

ALEX. My father, it was poured out like water, both on the passes of the Balkans and on the slopes of Plevna. Three times did my brother Nicholas hurl the masses of our soldiery against the Turkish intrenchments upon those fatal heights; and twice did the fierce fanatics of Osman sweep them back again with the hailstorm of their rifle-bullets.

PET. Hum! It sounds like bad generalship, if it was good surgery. But even this, thou sayest, failed to give thee a contented people. I do not greatly wonder at it, after all.

ALEX. There are even those who tell me that the war which we waged against Turkey was actually the means of embittering the discontent of our people. In that province of Bulgaria which we went to liberate from Turkish rule, our soldiers found a peasantry living in far greater comfort than the moujiks whom they had left behind them. The agents of Nihilism in our army were not slow to turn this discovery to



account on their return home ; and, spreading the story everywhere among the struggling inhabitants of our village communes, they prepared the ground but too effectually for their pernicious teachings.

PET. The more fools thou and thy counsellors for having given them such a text. Was there none among you with brains enough to foresee the risk ?

ALEX. I was deceived as to the state of the Bulgarian, and as to the mind of the Russian people.

PET. A Czar of Russia who is capable of being deceived in such a matter as the last, is incapable of rule.

ALEX. You judge me too severely, my father. I was dependent on those about me, and they led me astray.

PET. Dependent ! and led astray ! Is it a child in leading-strings that I see before me ? Didst thou think that God gave thee thy empire—my empire—to portion out among a pack of ignorant bailiffs like the lands of a bankrupt boyard ? It was for thee to govern, for thee to watch ; and for every hour thou didst spend in sleep, for every day that thou didst give to idleness the while thy people were murmuring in unnoticed discontent, be well assured, Alexander Nicolaevitch, that thou wilt have to render an account.

ALEX. I shall not fear, sir, to meet my audit. God knows how few have been my days of idleness from the hour when my father died ; and as for sleep,

conspiracy, which slept not itself, took care that I should not have too much of that.

PET. Then, why the devil didst thou make so poor a use of thy waking hours? Thou wilt not tell me that a whole people can go mad before their ruler knows it, unless he is either sot or slumberer, blind or moonstruck.

ALEX. My labours and sacrifices for my people attest my care for their welfare. You cannot have forgotten, sir, the great work by which my name will ever be remembered. Or has it never reached you in the Shades?

PET. What great work, in the name of all that is wonderful? It will go hard with it to be a greater work than has been wrought upon thee by thy enemies.

ALEX. I liberated the serfs! O my father, and father of thy people, as to this day they name thee with blessings even in the poorest hovels of the Russian peasantry! I liberated the serfs.

PET. I know it! I know it! Saints in heaven, man, dost think I am ignorant of that? But what of it? Didst thou do no more than free them from their lords?

ALEX. No more, sir! Nay, what more should—

PET. Didst thou fill their pockets with money? Didst thou burn down the vodka-shops? Didst thou hang the money-lenders? For every one of these things was necessary, as thou shouldst have known.

ALEX. I set free their hands to work for themselves, and I secured to them the fruits of their labour. What more should I have done?

PET. Thou shouldst have set free their souls, Alexander Nicolaevitch; and until that emancipation was accomplished thou wast only handing them from one master to another.

ALEX. But how, sir, can the virtues of freedom be ever taught to the slave? ❧

PET. Thou hast the cant of thy times at thy tongue's end, I see. . . . How? Why, by holding out freedom to them as their reward. Lads are not taught to ride by clapping them upon unbroken stallions: nor is it only a choice between that and keeping them in the nursery. The horse is the prize for proficiency on the pony. What ailed thee to hoist the moujik out of the cradle into the saddle without practice upon so much as a rocking-horse, and set him riding to the devil?

ALEX. I deemed, at any rate, that I might count upon his gratitude.

PET. What! for such a service? King Solomon might have taught thee better. When did a father ever earn gratitude from a spoilt child? And what of thy serfs' masters, pray? Didst thou expect their thanks as well?

ALEX. From the best of them, I did: and for the bad I cared not.

PET. Tut! there is neither bad nor good to think

of when a king is dealing with a great order of his subjects: it is strength and weakness, the useful and the useless, which alone concern him. To free the serf was to destroy the territorial nobility, and to leave the nameless millions of the Russian people face to face with their Czar. Why didst thou kick away thy props without knowing whether thou couldst stand alone?

ALEX. I obeyed the mandate of my heart and conscience; and even here, exiled before my time to the land of Shadows, I do not regret it.

PET. No: a heart and conscience like thine have sent many a man to Siberia; and the Czar who has banished them thither leaves them to regret it or not as they think fit. But when thou hadst found thy blessings come back to thee as curses, when thy people had shown that they cared not for the open hand of the benefactor, didst thou not close it the tighter upon the sceptre?

ALEX. The sceptre, my father, was too heavy for my grasp. . . . Nay, sir, be patient: I know not but that its weight would have overtaxed even an arm as powerful as your own.

PET. I would have brained my enemies with it ere I let it fall. Too heavy! and for me! What demon of doubt and cowardice has made thee think so?

ALEX. I will take the risk of angering you, sir, in speaking the truth.

PET. I am glad, at any rate, that thou hast

hardihood enough for that. It is something for thee to face the wrath of a shade. Say on.

ALEX. Know, then, my father, that since the days when you ruled in Russia a power mightier than the Czar's has arisen among men. Her servants are stronger than his soldiers, swifter than his messengers, stealthier than his spies, more hidden than his police.

PET. Well, what are her politics?

ALEX. Her politics? It was she, I tell you, Sir, with whom I was condemned to struggle, and who overthrew me at the last.

PET. Then she is a Nihilist.

ALEX. Alas! yes, my father.

PET. How came that about?

ALEX. How came it!

PET. Ay, thou bungler, how came it about? What ailed thee to fall out with the most powerful subject in thy dominions? If thou couldst not crush her, thou shouldst have used her.

ALEX. You know her not, sir. She has no more reverence for the Czar than for the meanest peasant.

PET. What! No more reverence for him who can lay an empire at her feet? If she cannot be bribed, she is no woman.

ALEX. Nor is she, sir. I spoke but in parable. Her name is Science.

PET. I guessed it, and there was parable in my answers. Thine enemy was of thy own making. What is there in Science which should make her less

the instrument of the ruler than the arts of war? Why else can Czars keep down rebellion save that they have arsenals and armouries, bullets and bayonets, shot and shell, roubles to clothe and feed and drill the soldier, and to buy the skill to lead him if they lack it themselves? Whereas the trader and the lawyer, the craftsman and the peasant, nay, nowadays even the noble himself, has neither these things nor the wherewithal to provide them, except in desperate disparity with the equipments of his ruler. But if a Czar should see a body of his subjects arming themselves, would he not be beforehand to crush them with his superior strength? And couldst not thou, with learning and laboratories, and a treasury able to spend a rouble for every copeck of thy enemy's—couldst not thou have won over this Science to thy side and turned her weapons against that Nihilism whom thou didst suffer to wield them against thee?

ALEX. Again, sir, must I answer you in the same words; you know her not. She is of the people before everything, and the poorest is well-nigh as much her master as the Czar himself. A single desperate man can blast a palace and its inmates to destruction for scarcely more than a workman's daily wage; a dozen such men, with brains to conceive a plot, and time to prepare it, and a little money to perfect it, may defy the utmost vigilance of the Czar's police, and pierce every barrier of his guards.

Ah! trust the words, sir, of one who has given the experiment but too terrible a trial. The monarch of these days is unequal to the conflict with the assassin.

PET. Never was he otherwise, when the assassin was reckless of his life. But this, thank God, he seldom has been; and the conspiracies, therefore, of which thou hast spoken—plots in which the hand is hidden and the regicide goes unavenged—are a new terror to the world. Yet stay! didst thou not tell me that thou wast smitten down in the open streets of Petersburg?

ALEX. It was so. . . . I saw my murderer . . . close. Our eyes met . . . for a moment, and then . . . he raised his hand . . . and then a flash! a shock! a world all blinding light and agony . . . and then cold, bitter cold . . . snow upon my shattered limbs, the ice-cold creeping to my heart . . . and then dim faces round me, and muttered voices in my ears . . . and then sleep . . . sleep. . . . Ah God! my God! what a death to die!

PET. Tush! It is a death like another! Enough of thy feelings. Didst thou *see* no more? No more, I mean, before the fellow flung his bomb, or at the moment of his flinging it? Thy guards! thy guards! were they as dazed and helpless as thyself?

ALEX. No, no! I remember now. I saw them spring forward to seize the assassin ere his lifted hand could let go its missile—too late! too late!

PET. Too late! Why? They must have grasped him the moment after he had flung it.

ALEX. I doubt not that they did.

PET. Then where the devil is thy grievance? It was life for life; and if thou wert not ready—ay, every day and hour to barter life for life with any traitor bold enough to strike the bargain, thou wast unfit for a throne. There is nothing in that exchange which a Czar should fear. I took thee to mean that the assassin, armed by Science, could strike in secrecy and safety against his ruler—that Science had made the most cowardly of conspirators a match for the bravest of kings—and that were terrible indeed.

ALEX. And that, sir, is the terrible truth. The manner of my death was what it chanced to be; a public crime which my successor will publicly avenge. But this is nothing to the attempts which I escaped by a hair's breadth—attempts of which the authors are to this day untraced. My death is nothing to the death-in-life of my closing years—a prisoner in my own palace, cut off by beleaguering treason from the world without.

PET. And thou didst submit to that, Alexander Nicolaevitch? Thou didst submit to that? By all the saints in heaven! I wonder that thou darest to tell me so! What! to be cooped up within four walls by plotting subjects, and never to sally from thy stronghold to look thine enemies in the face!



ALEX. Nay, sir, you are again unjust. I made my sortie, and you see what came of it. But you do not, you cannot, know the nature of the struggle I was forced to wage. You have spoken of the armies of the ruler, and of the overwhelming power which he wields through them over a rebellious people. But how if there are traitors in the camp? How, if the soldier on whom he relies, is in the pay of the enemy? It was so with me. I could trust no one: neither the sentry in the courtyard, nor the lackey in the ante-chamber, nor the secretary in the closet, nor the valet at the bedside. Treason was in the very air which I breathed. The written menaces of murder found their way to me at every hour and in every place. They stared upon me from placarded walls within my palace precincts; they lay upon my breakfast-table in the morning; they lurked beneath the very pillows of my bed. Tell me, sir, oh, tell me, you who have so harshly reproached me with my failure, what in my wretched straits would you yourself have done?

PET. Done! I would have swept the palace clear from the cellar to the garret. If my spies failed to track me out the conspirator in my household—and bribes should have won me traitors' traitors by the dozen—I would have sent the whole crew packing. The mines should have received them all—from the minister of state to the stable-boy, from the ladies of the Czarina's bed-chamber to the scullion in the kitchen.

ALEX. And how would you have replaced them?

PET. From the scum of the city, if need were. You had resolved to govern by the people, and made privilege your enemy in so doing. Why did you not throw yourself upon that people whom you trusted?

ALEX. You have forgotten, sir, the deadliest of my dangers. The people themselves had become estranged. The very traders of the capital, the last to lose their loyalty to a court, were infected with the revolutionary poison. A young Russian girl, of gentle blood and of refined culture, had attempted the life of the chief of my police; and, arraigned before a jury of the citizens—men of gravity and substance, orderly and of good repute—she was acquitted of the crime.

PET. Acquitted!

ALEX. Ay, and amid the rejoicings of the people. Judge now, sir, what inroads disaffection must have made among the people over whom you ruled. Judge now how changed must be their feelings towards their father the Czar.

PET. Changed indeed! changed indeed! Ah, Alexander Nicolaevitch, what hast thou done with my children?

ALEX. It is not for me to answer, sir. It is to fate and history that your question should be addressed. But I must dare to say to you that they found but little work of yours to mar.

PET. How? But little work of mine to mar! Did I not raise the people from barbarism? Did I not give them an army and a navy, and what they never had before, but only the name of it—a government? Did I not teach them arts and industries, and encourage trade with foreign countries, which before was forbidden, and reform their finances, relieving burdens and punishing fraud?

ALEX. All these things you did, sir, except the first. You never raised the people from barbarism, though you taught them some of the arts of civilisation. They are barbarians still. The masses of the people are as dull and brutish as you left them a century and a half ago; and the classes whom you dragged rather than led into the path of Western progress have followed it to a truly miserable goal. They have breathed the atmosphere of the West, and it has made them mad.

PET. You talk in riddles, Alexander Nicolaevitch.

ALEX. Nihilism, then, must serve for the answer. The educated Russian has learnt nothing from the later civilisation of Europe but to babble its phrases and to dream its dreams, to catch its trick of scoff and scepticism, and to share its shadowy ideals.

PET. Dost thou dare to tell me that all my labours to enlighten them have had no other effect than this?

ALEX. You gave them tools, my father, which they could not use; you opened before them a book which they could not read aright. The former they

ply like a child who has gotten hold of a knife—for mischief and destruction alone: in the latter they see nothing but its pages of confusion and bloodshed. It is the educated Russian who is the political corrupter of the rude. Nowhere has Nihilism and its doctrines left a deeper impress than on the minds of the professor and of the student. Better, far better, that you had left them in that darkness of ignorance in which you found them! Do you not think so, now, my father? Do you not feel it?

PET. No, by Heaven! not I. Were it to do again, I would do it. I would not that Russia should hold aloof from the army of progress, even though in advancing she should tread her Czar beneath her feet.

ALEX. Then I would to God, sir, that you had been as immortal in fact as you are in name. You should have lived to our own day, either to preserve your blessings, if blessings they were, to the Russian people, or, if they were curses, to answer for their infliction. Above all, it should have fallen upon you to choose whether now, having put the cry of the conspirators into their mouths, you would answer it by defiance or yield to it.

PET. Never once since we began to converse together have you told me what that cry may be.

ALEX. They clamour for a constitution, for government of the people by themselves.

PET. He who says that I put that cry into their mouths has a lie in his own.

ALEX. You opened their ears, my father, to the voices which came to them from the West. They have imitated the loudest of them, as the mocking-bird mimics the shrillest note he hears: and little more than fifty years from the day when you left them the cry of "Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality," was ringing round the world.

PET. I know it; I have heard it even here. Never was there such turmoil in the Shades as there has been since first those words were heard. An endless stream of dead poured down to us day by day, rejoicing to shout it as they came. It was years ere this procession of madmen ceased, and Charon's crews once more came crying "Live the emperor!" like sane and Christian men.

ALEX. Alas, my father! The one watchword is but the echo of the other, and each alike is the cry of men who uphold the sovereignty of the people. Should a Czar give ear to it?

PET. Give ear to it! Give ear to it! Thou hast a wondrous knack of hiding away the meaning. To what murmur from his people, however wild and senseless, should a Czar be deaf? Should the nurse not listen to the infant's wailings because they must sometimes be answered with the palm of the hand?

ALEX. I meant not to ask whether a Czar should merely hearken to these clamours of his people. In that, indeed, he has no choice. Their cries for liberty and self-government sound ever in his ears. But

should they be answered with concession or denial? That, my father, is the awful problem which the Czar of Russia is condemned to solve. Is the sovereignty of the nation to be at last acknowledged by him, or is it not?

PET. Art thou demented, Alexander Nicolaevitch, or art thou not? Dost thou mean to ask me whether a Czar should rule, or abdicate? or what dost thou mean?

ALEX. The claim of these conspirators, sir, nay—for why deny it?—the claim of the whole nation, is for representative institutions. They ask that the people shall be empowered to choose a parliament of deputies to make laws for them, to protect their rights, to promote their interests, and to check and limit the authority of their imperial master over their lives and liberties.

PET. Ha! Is that all?

ALEX. Nay, sir, they demand further that the Czar on his part should grant a constitution, pledging himself to respect and to maintain the powers vested in this body of representatives, and to exercise his own powers only in conformity therewith.

PET. Hast thou yet done?

ALEX. The ordering of the finances, the administration of justice, the control of the army and the navy, the levying of war, and the conclusion of peace—these are among the matters in which, if these demands were granted, the Czar would share his authority with

his people. Should they, then, be granted—yes or no? For myself I have steadily resisted them, and it is my resistance which has brought me here. But there were not wanting men among my counsellors—men of loyalty and wisdom, of experience and caution—who urged me earnestly and even passionately to submit. There were even those who said that had you, my father, worn the crown in my own day, you would have granted a constitution to the people.

PET. And what didst thou do to those who said it? . . . Nothing. I knew it. Nothing. And yet thou pretendest reverence for the memory of thine ancestors.

ALEX. Would you, then, have refused to——

PET. To fling my crown to the crowd for a football? Ay! Alexander Nicolaevitch, I would! More, I would have knouted the knave or fool of a counsellor who proposed it, and I scorn the degenerate descendant who did not himself repel it with contempt. What! to the people whom thou didst confess but now to be still barbarians—to them, and to the ruin and confusion of their barbarism, thou wouldst surrender thy divine trust—the State! There have been kings who have in their lifetime handed down a too heavy sceptre to a son; but never before have I met with one who talked of abdicating in favour of the devil, and yet thought to stand unashamed thereafter before the judgment-seat of God.

ALEX. I shrink, my father, beneath your reproaches,

for I feel them just. And yet, if it were impossible to——

PET. To what? It is never impossible to die at thy post, as thou thyself hast proved. Thine own death, and thy son's death, and the death of thy son's son—what were all these that thou shouldst reckon them against the crime and the disgrace of flight?

ALEX. To die for the nation is of little use. One must learn to govern them, to reconcile them to their Czar, and to teach them happiness under his rule.

PET. And what has ever given thee the right to say that that is impossible? What hast thou ever done to further it? Answer me! . . . Nay, silence! Answer me not till I have asked thee this. What hast thou done to purge thy country of the worst of its diseases, and the source of full half its miseries and discontent? What hast thou done to rid it of the ulcer of corruption—that corroding ulcer which has been eating slowly into the vitals of Russia from my day to thine? Does the judge sell justice to the suitor, does the general rob the soldier, does the petitioner have to bribe his way from clerk to clerk up to the bureau of the minister, as in the Russia of thy father's and thy grandfather's day? . . . I see the truth. It is so.

ALEX. I have striven, my father, believe me, I have striven, to uproot the evil. But . . . but it is ancient, it is deep-set, the official class is powerful . . . administrative efficiency is scarce . . . and—and——



PET. And thou hast given up the work in despair? No wonder that thy people rise against thee! No wonder that they cry out for leave to rule themselves, when they see the knaves by whom they are governed! Away! let thy son go flush these foul sewers of the State. Let him cleanse his offices and orderly-rooms, his law-courts and his treasury; and, this done, it will be time enough to talk of the "impossible" in government, and to think of a parliament of barbarians.

ALEX. But hear me, sir——

PET. No more! I am weary of talking, and of thee; and there will be another here anon with whom I would fain have speech. Russian justice is speedy: it is its only virtue. I need delay no longer to go and meet thy murderer. Wilt thou come with me, that I may see thee face to face with him? . . . Thou wilt not? Ha! . . . Farewell, then! I will go alone. 'Tis a hardy villain, whoever he be; and I have ever loved to look upon a brave man.

## X

### JOHNSON AND COLERIDGE

COLE. Do not go, Dr. Johnson. There are still many subjects I would fain discuss with you. Or are you wearied by our conversation?

JOHN. Why, no, sir. I will not deny that I am wearied; but it is not by anything which I can reasonably call conversation. For conversation—if any credit is to be given either to usage or to etymology—implies an interchange of ideas.

COLE. You mean that——

JOHN. Nay, sir, I will not put my meaning any more plainly. You shall not add to my discomfort by forcing me to say something which I should regret. Continue your discourse on the distinction—which at present is to me entirely incomprehensible—between the Reason and the Understanding.

COLE. I had hoped, Dr. Johnson, that I had fully explained myself on that subject. I have, at any rate, nothing to add.

JOHN. Nothing to add, sir! Then I must tell you, Mr. Coleridge, at the risk of incivility, that you

have united two feats which might well be deemed incapable of conjunction. You have made me impatient for your conclusion, and you are now leaving me indignant that you have no more to say.

COLE. I cannot see that any further explanation is necessary.

JOHN. Sir, you speak without thinking. As well might you say that you see no necessity for a candle when a room is in darkness. Further explanation is always necessary so long as the matter to be explained remains obscure.

COLE. The phrase I used, may have been ill chosen, Dr. Johnson; but you should excuse a choice which was dictated by politeness. I might have said that no further explanation ought to be necessary.

JOHN. That, in fact, the room is already lighted, hey? And that it is only to my blindness that it appears dark. Be it so, sir. That blindness is, at any rate, complete and hopeless, since from the lengthy discourse with which you have favoured me, I have not carried away a single intelligible sentence.

COLE. Our disappointment, then, is mutual.

JOHN. Possibly; but not equal. For you, at least, have had the satisfaction of hearing yourself speak.

COLE. Let us change the subject, Dr. Johnson.

JOHN. With all my heart, sir. And if we changed the treatment of it also, 'twould be no bad thing.

COLE. With that which I now propose to discuss, I trust I shall be more fortunate.

JOHN. You may make yourself easy on that score, sir. I shall not leave the event to the arbitrament of fortune.

COLE. How so?

JOHN. Why, sir, if you are not more intelligible on this occasion, I shall stop you.

COLE. There will be no need ; for on this occasion I shall be not so much instructor as disciple.

JOHN. The part is so new to you, sir, and seems so foreign alike to your disposition and to the method of what you describe as your conversation, that I shall await the result with curiosity.

COLE. May I ask your opinion of the Romantic Movement—the Romantic Revival in English poetry?

JOHN. Why, yes, sir, I see not how I can prevent your asking me that question ; indeed, you have already done so. But whether you may ask it with any reasonable expectation of a reply is another matter.

COLE. Within a very few years after your departure from among us it was already beginning to breathe a new spirit into English song.

JOHN. Sir, you are now giving a reason why you should expect no answer to your question. Had this “movement,” as you call it, begun to move before instead of after my departure, there had been more sense in asking my opinion of it.

COLE. Nay, sir, all I meant by my reference to dates was to remind you that this new school of

poetry was the immediate successor of that to which you belonged. I happen to know that you have been made acquainted with its principles. You have conversed with Mr. Wordsworth.

JOHN. Well, sir, and what of that?

COLE. You cannot fail to have discussed the Romantic Revival with him.

JOHN. What right have you to assume that, sir?

COLE. A right derived, Dr. Johnson, from long intimacy with Mr. Wordsworth on earth, and from a consequent knowledge of what incessantly occupied his thoughts.

JOHN. Do you mean that he was always thinking of your Romantic Revival?

COLE. No; but of something very closely connected with it—his own poetry.

JOHN. Why, yes, sir: he has certainly discoursed of that, and he has endeavoured to persuade me that there is no difference between the proper language of poetry and the common speech of the rudest and meanest of mankind. Am I to understand, sir, that the object of your Romantic movement was to substitute the jargon of Giles and Hodge for the high discourse in which the poet has in all ages sought to express himself? Was it the notable discovery of the new school that he should aim at a style of diction as much below that of a cultivated reader as he has hitherto striven to rise above it?

COLE. Give me leave to explain, Dr. Johnson. The promoters of the Romantic Revival proposed to themselves a twofold aim. They sought at once to reform the language of poetry and to renew its spirit. They not only called on the poet to free himself from the trammels of a frigid and conventional vocabulary, but they invited him to come closer to nature, and to view her with his own enkindled eye instead of through the dim and distorting glass which an outworn poetical tradition had too long interposed between the human vision and its objects. . . . Do you follow me, sir?

JOHN. I rather precede than follow you. I have heard all this before. You are merely repeating the nonsense of your friend.

COLE. It was to the reform of poetic diction that he specially, and perhaps not altogether discreetly, addicted himself. I myself was more concerned in the endeavour after a renewal of the spirit of poetry, and its reconciliation with the truth of nature. And I must admit that Mr. Wordsworth carried his theories on the subject of poetic diction to a point at which I was myself compelled to oppose them, and at which, too, they have justly, I think, incurred your reprehension.

JOHN. Sir, I am much beholden to you for your candour. You have shown a most honourable willingness to admit that it was your friend's part in your common undertaking which was ill done.

COLE. I have not yet, however, completed my account of my own share. So far the movement might be more correctly, as indeed it often is, described by the term Naturalist. The Romantic element in the movement was supplied by myself. Have I your permission to quote from memory a passage from the *Biographia Literaria*?

JOHN. To refuse it, sir, would be a breach of our understanding. I say no more.

COLE. In a conversation with Mr. Wordsworth on the subject of poetry "the thought suggested itself (to which of us I do not recollect) that a series of poems might be composed of two sorts." In the one class "subjects were to be chosen from ordinary life ; the characters and incidents were to be such as will be found in every village and its vicinity where there is a meditative and feeling mind to seek after them, or to notice them when they present themselves." That class of poetry I left to Mr. Wordsworth. But in the other class, which I reserved to myself, "the incidents and agents were to be, in part at least, supernatural ; and the excellence aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions as would naturally accompany such situations, supposing them real." Now, I am of course aware, Dr. Johnson, that your prepossessions in favour of the old theory of poetry, and of its limitations are naturally strong. Still, you may not object, at any rate in principle,

to such an extension of its sphere as I here suggest.

JOHN. Sir, I object to no extension of its sphere which does not cause it to transgress the boundaries of common sense. So long as your romantic poet is content to observe those limits, I have nothing against him. But does he—can he do so? Have you done so yourself, Mr. Coleridge?

COLE. I am not quite certain that I know precisely what you mean by common sense in this connection.

JOHN. Sir, your uncertainty does not surprise me.

COLE. Should you consider me to have respected the restrictions of common sense, if I have realised my own formula just recited to you—if, that is to say, I have in my poetry described with dramatic truth such emotions as would naturally accompany the situations imagined by me, supposing that they had been real?

JOHN. Why, no, sir; I should require more than that. The situations themselves, although imaginary, must not be fantastic to the point of incredibility. That, indeed, it seems to me, is presupposed in your own canon. For I know not what emotions would “naturally accompany” incredible situations, and we could not, therefore, determine whether you had described them with “dramatic truth.”

COLE. Be it so, Dr. Johnson. I accept your



enlargement of my 'formula, and I humbly' submit that, as thus enlarged, I have observed it.

JOHN. What, sir? in your poem, for instance, of the "Ancient Mariner?"

COLE. You know it?

JOHN. Almost by heart. You have admirers here who have recited it to me till I am sick of it and of them. But, come, sir, have you ever seriously considered the argument of that poem? Have you ever reviewed the concatenation of cause and effect in the adventures of your hero?

COLE. Truly, Dr. Johnson, I think I may answer Yes. I do not say that the incidents follow one another by precisely the same law of causation as that which governs the ordinary affairs of men.

JOHN. Why, no, sir; you could hardly say that. But you do not seem to see that in refraining from saying it you abandon the claim of your poem to be accounted a rational composition.

COLE. That I cannot admit.

JOHN. Sir, we do not require an admission of what is self-evident, either from you or anybody else. There are not two laws of causation, one for the ordinary affairs of men and the other for incidents feigned by poets. One thing is either the cause of another or it is not; and that truth holds good whether the two things happen in Fleet Street or in the Antarctic Ocean.

COLE. Surely, sir, you would not deny the poet's

privilege of imagining the intervention of supernatural agencies?

JOHN. Certainly not, sir. Who talks of denying him that privilege? We may very well imagine the activity of minor supernatural agents, even as we believe in the real existence of a Supreme supernatural Power. But inasmuch as it seems good to that Supreme Power to act by "second causes" only in ordering the course of nature and the affairs of man, so your minor supernatural agents must themselves conform their action to what you call the ordinary law of causation.

COLE. Why *must* they?

JOHN. Nay, sir, this is trifling. You cannot be putting such a question to me seriously.

COLE. In all seriousness, I assure you. Why must a supernatural agent employ the ordinary machinery of causation in a poem?

JOHN. Surely, sir, the answer is obvious. It is because poetry is the imitation of nature, and can only please in proportion to the fidelity with which it imitates. We may grant the poet his supernatural agent, because that concession is familiar to us in surveying Nature itself, behind which we are compelled by the constitution of our minds to assume the existence of a directing Power. But, as I have already reminded you, that Power acts not by a series of miracles, but by an orderly succession of phenomena, following one another according to a

fixed law of cause and effect. And a poet who insists on liberating his supernatural agents from the law, and making them bring about the incidents of his poem not by causal sequence but by a series of miracles, will speedily fatigue, and must ultimately disgust the reader.

COLE. And do you contend that every incident of the "Ancient Mariner" is brought about by miracle?

JOHN. Sir, you are captious; I contend for nothing so absurd. I refer to the main incidents of the fable. There is nothing miraculous in shooting an albatross with a crossbow.

COLE. And is not that a main incident, Dr. Johnson?

JOHN. Why, no, sir, not in itself, no more than shooting a porpoise or catching a dog-fish over the ship's side. It only becomes a main incident by reason of its supposed consequences. And they are miraculous.

COLE. But surely——

JOHN. Nay, sir, let us have no more on't. This sort of argument can never be anything but barren. Shall we examine the poem together? Recite it to me; for of course you have it by heart. . . . You hesitate. Come, my dear sir, be not more backward than your own mariner. You have, at any rate, a less unwilling hearer than his wedding guest.

COLE. Well, Dr. Johnson, if it will give you pleasure to hear it——

JOHN. Sir, I did not say that. It will give me pleasure to criticise it ; and as you, I doubt not, will find pleasure in reciting it, we shall mutually oblige each other.

COLE (*recites PART I. of the poem*)—

It is an ancient Mariner,  
And he stoppeth one of three, etc.

“God save thee, ancient Mariner,  
From the fiends that plague thee thus!—  
Why look'st thou so ?”—With my crossbow  
I shot the Albatross.

JOHN. Yes, sir, all is plain sailing enough so far. But we are not told why the mariner shot the bird ; and an act which led to such momentous consequences should at least have been explained. We will assume, however, that it was a mere act of wanton barbarity, not prompted by any considerations even of misconceived expediency. Pray proceed.

COLE (*recites PART II. of the poem*)—

The Sun now rose upon the sight, etc.

Ah, well-a-day ! What evil looks  
Had I from old and young !  
Instead of the cross, the Albatross  
About my neck was hung.

JOHN. Now, sir, let us see how we stand. The south wind—raised, as I take it, by the albatross—was blowing the vessel northward, when the Mariner shot the bird, thus, as it appears, giving grave umbrage, for some unexplained reason, to the Spirit of the South Pole, who allows the vessel to reach the

equator, and then proceeds to punish the offence by becalming her. The crew in the mean time, having wavered between the opinion that the Ancient Mariner is a public enemy for having slain the bird that brought the south wind, and the counter opinion that he is a public benefactor for having rid them of a bird that "brought the fog and mist," settle down at last to the conclusion that he is responsible for their being becalmed, and hang the albatross round his neck in token thereof.

COLE. Hitherto, then, you will admit, sir, that my supernatural agent has operated by the employment of ordinary causes.

JOHN. Why, yes, sir, almost too ordinary ; for a calm, I believe, is so common in these latitudes that one would never suspect a Polar Spirit of having a hand in bringing it about. But now for Part III. We are coming, I think, to the phantom ship. You will not think me uncivil, I hope, if I ask you to bring her alongside at once, with the sun shining through her hull.

COLE.—

And straight the Sun was flecked with bars  
(Heaven's mother send us grace !),  
As if through a dungeon-grate he peered,  
With broad and burning face.

Are those her ribs through which the Sun  
Did peer, as through a grate ?

JOHN. Well may he ask that question. Probably

it occurred to him that if the sun could shine through the ribs of a ship, the sea would not be long in making free with her interior.

COLE. Surely, sir, you can imagine a phantom ship?

JOHN. To be sure I can, sir; but it must at least be wholly diaphanous. What you ask me to present to my mental vision is a phantom ship with opaque ribs. I cannot do it; and I will make bold to say, Mr. Coleridge, that you cannot either.

COLE. It seems to me that——

JOHN. Nay, sir, do not attempt to justify a faulty image by a sophistical defence. It occurred to you that a red sun peering through a ship's ribs, like a slice of tomato on a gridiron, would have a striking effect, and you dashed it into your picture with as little regard for imagination as for actual truth. Go on to the gaming-bout between the two spectres.

COLE.—

The naked hulk alongside came,  
And the twain were casting dice;  
"The game is done; I've won! I've won!"  
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

JOHN. My Lady Life-in-Death is an easily contented gamester. She has won the Mariner; but Death has won all the rest of the ship's company—two hundred strong, as it afterwards appears.

COLE (*continuing*)—

The Sun's rim dips; the stars rush out;  
At one stride comes the dark, etc.

Till clombe above the eastern bar  
 The hornéd Moop, with one bright star  
 Within the nether tip.

JOHN. Hold, sir! This is an impossibility. How could a star appear "within the nether tip" of another heavenly body, which is only apparently and not really "horned"? Surely, Mr. Coleridge, you must have forgotten that, though the illuminated segment of the moon may be shaped like a crescent, the moon itself throughout all its phases remains a disc; and its darkened portion, therefore, must necessarily intercept our view of any star—unless, indeed, it were one nearer to the earth than our satellite, and no such luminary exists. However, if the ribs of a phantom ship may become opaque in order to provide the sun with a grating to look through, I know not why, on the other hand, the opacity of the moon should not become transparent to the rays of a star. But we are coming, I think, to the sudden death of the crew.

COLE (*continuing*)—

Four times fifty living men  
 (And I heard nor sigh nor groan),  
 With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,  
 They dropped down one by one.

The souls did from their bodies fly,  
 They fled to bliss or woe!  
 And every soul it passed me by  
 Like the whizz of my crossbow!

JOHN. Your Polar Spirit, sir seems to have got well away from ordinary processes of causation by this time. After bringing on an unnecessary phantom ship, with impossible ribs and two superfluous spectres gratuitously dicing on its deck, he makes two hundred men drop down dead at the same moment from no known cause; and, so far as I can see, for no intelligible offence.

COL. They had justified the Mariner's act, and had thereby become accessories to it.

JOHN. True, sir. But the principal escapes. On this reckoning, it is to be accounted a less heinous crime to shoot an albatross than to entertain even for a moment the superstitious belief that it was righteously shot. But we are now at Part IV., I think.

COLE (*recites PART IV. without interruption from his companion down to the description of the water-snakes in the closing stanzas*)—

O happy living things ! no tongue  
Their beauty might declare.  
A spring of love gushed from my heart,  
And I blessed them unaware.  
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,  
And I blessed them unaware.

JOHN. How does one bless water-snakes "unaware"? Is it as one entertains angels?

COL. It is your turn to be captious now, Dr. Johnson. "Unaware," of course, means "involuntarily, instinctively."



JOHN. Be it so, sir. Then, having instinctively blessed these aquatic reptiles, in consideration of the beauty of their skins and their real or apparent enjoyment of life, the Mariner is freed from the burden which has been hanging round his neck. Is this a case of the ordinary law of causation?

COLE. No, indeed, sir; but there is what I may call a symbolical sequence between the two.

JOHN. Nay, sir, what stuff is this? The symbolical sequence of the occurrence, if I rightly understand what you mean by the expression, is as fanciful as could be any imaginary physical connection between the two. What you intended<sup>3</sup> to convey, I presume, was that the man's emotions at the sight of these creatures atoned for his previous crime, and earned him the forgiveness symbolised by the fall of the albatross from his neck.

COLE. You have rightly apprehended my intention.

JOHN. Then why, let me ask you, sir, should a man be forgiven for shooting a bird because he happens to admire the beauty of a reptile?

COLE. I think, Dr. Johnson, that you will find a sufficient explanation of that in the moral of the poem.

JOHN. Indeed, sir! Then let us get to the moral as speedily as may be. I will undertake not to interrupt you again, and that without taking any great credit for my self-restraint.

COLE (*recites PARTS V., VI., and VII., repeating the last four stanzas with much emphasis and unction*)—

- • Farewell, farewell ! but this I tell  
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest,  
He prayeth well, who loveth well  
Both man and bird and beast.

He prayeth best, who loveth best  
All things both great and small ;  
For the dear God who loveth us,  
He made and loveth all.

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,  
Whose beard with age is hoar,  
Is gone ; and now the Wedding-Guest  
Turned from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one who had been stunned,  
And is of sense forlorn ;  
A sadder and a wiser man,  
He rose the morrow morn.

JOHN. Why, yes, sir, sadder, perhaps ; for even a man but moderately addicted to conviviality might well lament the exchange of a wedding-feast for so unsatisfying a regale of words. But how wiser ?

COLE. Surely, sir, in this, that——

JOHN. Stay, Mr. Coleridge. I promised not to interrupt your recital of the remainder of your poem, and I have not done so ; but I am under no pledge to refrain from perstringing some of its more obtrusive absurdities. It seems from Part V. that your Polar Spirit—who, as we know, could raise “a good South wind” by a nod of his spiritual head—must needs slide under the keel “nine fathom deep” in order to propel the ship himself. Is that your notion, sir, of

allowing your supernatural being to operate by natural causes? It further appears, too, that he was somewhat precipitate in slaying the whole crew as accessories after the fact to the murder of the albatross, since he has to raise them from the dead in order to navigate the ship; though why the navigation of a ship which is being propelled by a spirit under her keel should require the resurrection of anybody but the steersman, or why the other mariners "gan work the ropes" of a vessel with no wind to fill her sails, you have not told us. No, sir, nor why the resuscitated dead should again fall lifeless on the deck—still less why "a man all light, a seraph man," should stand like a link-boy on every corse. Least of all do you condescend to explain the ship's course on her return home. She has been sailing northward through the Pacific, when suddenly the Mariner exclaims—

"Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed  
The lighthouse top I see?  
Is this the hill? is this the kirk?  
Is this mine own countree?"

Never was question more justified by circumstances. For if, as I presume him to be, your mariner was an inhabitant of the Eastern and not of the Western Hemisphere, he could only have reached his "own countree" by way of Bering Strait, and by skirting the continent of North America, through the impenetrable icefields of the Arctic Ocean.

COLE. Your criticisms, Dr. Johnson, appear to me to insist on a more severe accuracy in romantic poetry than you began by postulating.

JOHN. How so, sir? You inquired whether I was willing to enlarge the sphere of poetry so as to take in what you call the Romantic variety. I signified my willingness to do so, but stipulated, on my own part, that I should not be asked to accompany you as a Romantic poet in any excursion beyond the boundaries of common sense. To these terms I understood you to assent. I ask you, sir, have you adhered to them?

COLE. There are conditions under which——

JOHN. Sense and nonsense are one? It is not so; I cannot admit the identity. The poet, like all the rest of the world, must choose between one and the other; and, to speak plainly, Mr. Coleridge, I think the choice which you have made in your "Ancient Mariner" is unmistakable.

COLE. Will you allow me, Dr. Johnson, to——

JOHN. Nay, sir, to what end? You have failed in establishing the thesis with which you set out; and what would be gained by continuing the discussion? Either you would attempt to take up new ground—and that I am not inclined to permit—or you would propose another journey over the ground which we have already traversed; and in that expedition I am equally indisposed to accompany you.

COLE. My dear sir, you mistake me altogether. I do not wish to re-argue the case of the "Ancient Mariner;" let it go. What I desire to do is to contest your definition of poetry.

JOHN. That, sir, you can only do by contending either that sense and nonsense are identical, or that in poetry one is as much in place as the other. The former of these propositions is an insult to the human intelligence, and the latter to the noblest of its products. I cannot consent to discuss either with you.

COLE. Will you not renew this conversation at some future time?

JOHN. Why, no, sir. I should be wanting in respect for Reason, and, I will add, in reverence for the Divine Bestower of that gift upon mankind, if I were to make any such appointment. I am not sure, indeed, that the discussion in which I have already engaged has not been in some degree derogatory to both; and I shall close it, therefore, by bidding you adieu.

## XI

### LORD BEACONSFIELD AND SIR ROBERT PEEL

LORD B. Surely I cannot be mistaken! Sir Robert Peel.

PEEL. Your countenance seems familiar to me, but I cannot at the moment connect it with a name.

LORD B. The name, perhaps—that is, the later name—will be less familiar than the face. Disraeli you knew in the flesh: of Lord Beaconsfield you can only have heard.

PEEL. Mr. Disraeli—I beg your pardon, Lord Beaconsfield—you are greatly changed in appearance. . . . And not in the least improved. As outlandish-looking as ever.

LORD B. Age, Sir Robert, has doubtless found more points for attack in my exterior than it could discover in yours. . . . Prim respectability is immortal and unchangeable, or the English would not be the race they are.

PEEL. Time has certainly been busy with you, my lord, since we last met on earth.

LORD B. He is indeed the most reckless of Radicals,

continually destroying without a thought of replacement.

PEEL. Yes, and like the Radical, or those who borrow from the Radical, habitually representing destruction as merely change. "Time has greatly altered you," says one man to another, meaning by the euphemism, "He is killing you; he has visibly broken up your health; I see death in your face." And just so it is that under the soothing phrase of "constitutional change" we seek to disguise those collapses of political health, or it may be those treacheries of the political physician, which portend the dissolution of States.

LORD B. Dear me! These are not the figures with which you were most familiar in the other world, Sir Robert. Forgive me for doubting whether you manipulate them with the same success. Even as metaphors, indeed, I think they overshoot the mark. Surely we need not waste so much admiration on the transforming magic of Time, when we recollect how often he has been outstripped by politicians metamorphosing themselves. He "toiled in vain," for instance, after the illustrious but instantaneous convert from Protection to Free Trade.

PEEL. And he seems to have striven as vainly to correct your audacity, my lord. One would scarcely have expected that last taunt from the opponent of a £7 franchise in 1866, and the creator of household suffrage in 1867.

LORD B. Why not? Glass houses? My dear Sir Robert, pray reflect. The stones have been flying for fifteen years. I have not a single unbroken pane left.

PEEL. You seem to be but little disturbed by it.

LORD B. Who would be? What man of sense was ever disturbed by the charge of inconsistency? What damage did it ever do, or deserve to do?

PEEL. This is not the language of 1846. .

LORD B. Nor are these the circumstances. You might as well accuse me of inconsistency on that account. It is the business of the politician to adapt himself to circumstances; and the sham virtue of "political consistency" is only another name for the blindness which misses facts, or the stupidity which misinterprets them, or the obstinacy which resists them. I find it hard, I say, to conceive of a statesman of the first class who could be even momentarily moved by the accusation of inconsistency; while as to suffering torture under it, as to permitting it to prey upon the health and spirits, as to allowing one's days to be darkened, and one's life, perhaps, to be shortened by it—I am sure you will agree with me, Sir Robert, that such weakness as that would be a sure sign of inferiority of character. . . . You are silent. You seem troubled. I hope you do not dissent.

PEEL. No; I do *not* dissent. I accept your statement as correct, but I must construe its language



strictly. To dread a charge of mere inconsistency would be weakness indeed. But dishonesty, but treacherous desertion of political comrades, but sacrifice of principle to place,—accusations such as these, my lord——

LORD B. Amount to precisely the same thing. I am surprised that so experienced a party politician should make so little allowance for the rhetoric of party. .

PEEL. The rhetoric of party! Of party! You do yourself injustice. The satiric gift of Mr. Disraeli was never dedicated to such narrow uses. His sarcasms, he no doubt felt, were “meant for mankind;” and he launched them first, for choice, at those members of the human species who happened to stand in the path of his advancement. The rhetoric of party! If ever personal motives inspired an attack, if ever pique and vanity, rancour and ambition combined to animate invective, it was—— But enough. I have no wish to offend you, and to speak my whole mind on such a matter might possibly give offence.

LORD B. Not at all. I beg you will continue. I am a new-comer here, you know, and I have a direct interest in ascertaining how long one’s animosities may be kept alive.

PEEL. You are mistaken, Lord Beaconsfield, if you suspect me of any such feelings towards you. I am even willing to admit that I may in some things

have done you injustice. We never understood one another.

LORD B. "We never understood one another" is usually the self-flattering gloss for "I could not make head or tail of you." Do not think me discourteous if I decline to associate myself with your failure. I can understand that I may have puzzled you; for there have been others whom a nature of singular simplicity appears to have equally mystified. But I think I may say without presumption that your own character had no secrets for me.

PEEL. I did not desire it to have secrets for any one. But I may question your personal ability to interpret it. I cannot think that our political lives were guided by a common principle of action.

LORD B. Explain yourself, Sir Robert. I know I need not expect to hear the parrot cry of "Adventurer!" from a man of such liberality as yourself. You will leave that for the tongues of disappointed dukes. Superior as were some of your advantages to mine, your ascent to the leadership of the aristocratic party was, no less than my own, the triumph of a middle-class adventurer.

PEEL. If I were not proud to own it, I should have too much pride to deny it. I should be the last to taunt any man with not having been born to the position which he fills. But honours may be won under different circumstances and by different arts.

LORD B. The justice of your remark, Sir Robert,

shall excuse its lack of novelty. You would, however, have put your meaning with more point and precision, if with somewhat less delicacy, had you said that honours may be honourably and dishonourably won, and that mine were——

PEEL. I do not deal in such unmeasured language ; nor would it become me to apply the word “dishonourable” to any career which the English people has deliberately selected for honour. But I need not be taken to pass any moral verdict upon it in insisting that it was very differently inspired from my own. How came you, for instance, to take the Conservative side in politics ?

LORD B. How do most men choose the party to which they attach themselves ?

PEEL. The word “choose” is itself not very happily chosen. I do not know that there is, or ought to be, much choice in the matter.

LORD B. Indeed ? Would you, then, exclude all young men from political life with the exception of those who happen to be either the eldest or the dullest of their families ? For no one can be said to have no choice as to his political party except either him whose opinions have become fixed by mature years, or him in whom they have been determined by family obligations, or him, lastly, who has had too little activity or force of character to do more than acquire them by a process—fraught indeed, with tender associations from another field of human

development, but applied with less propriety to the nutriment of healthy political tissue—the process of imbibition.

PEEL. You misunderstand me. To maintain that a man should have no choice as to his political party is not to say that he should defer entering public life until his opinions are unalterably fixed.

LORD B. You feel, I perceive, that that would be condemning too many of us to a private life.

PEEL. It would be enough that any man seeking entrance to Parliament should feel compelled by present conviction to range himself on the side of this political party rather than that.

LORD B. And not upon the side of neither? You would, then, extinguish the breed of “independent members,” who, I own, are a great nuisance.

PEEL. By no means. I have as little liking for the species as you have, but it has a perfect right to exist, and it is the offspring of conviction, not of choice—at least, in the objectionable sense of the word.

LORD B. What *is* the objectionable sense of the word? For I confess you are puzzling me a little now. You would have every man take his place either as a Conservative, because his own Conservatism impels him to do so; or as a Liberal, because his Liberal faith will not permit him to do otherwise; or as an independent member, because his conviction that he is wiser than both of them is irresistible.

But this is surely an exhaustive enumeration of political species. Obscurity was not among your faults of expression, Sir Robert, but, for the life of me—if that ejaculation is still permitted to us here—I cannot guess who they are to whom you object.

PEEL. My obscurity is in this case a tribute to good manners. I find it difficult to express my meaning inoffensively.

LORD B. Your difficulty itself is not of the ~~most~~ flattering kind for my feelings.

PEEL. Of that I am fully sensible, and I will at once put the matter plainly. I have no liking, then, for politicians who choose their party as Dugald Dalgetty chose *his*, that is to say, with an eye to profit and promotion, and in indifference, positive or comparative, to the merits of the espoused cause.

LORD B. Are there such politicians?

PEEL. Do you really know of no one answering to the description?

LORD B. I can hardly suppose you to be thinking of the lawyers. To them, indeed, it applies exactly; but I have never thought of them as politicians at all, any more than as inventors because they occasionally conduct patent cases, or as physicians because they have sometimes to pick up medicine enough for the cross-examination of a medical expert. They cram politics as they would mechanics or toxicology, and no one ever supposed that they care any more what views they adopt in the one science

than what theories they uphold in the others. It is perfectly well understood that if the prospects of Conservatism appear most promising at any given moment, or if the Liberal party happen to be overwiggled, the rising barrister will be full of enthusiasm for the throne and the altar; while if the state of parties is reversed, he will burn with equal ardour in the cause for which Hampden suffered on the field and Sidney on the scaffold.

PEEL. The lawyer is the privileged Swiss of politics, and the man of whom I am thinking was not a lawyer. Come, my lord, we need not fence with one another here, and the aged Earl of Beaconsfield can afford to answer truly for the youthful Benjamin Disraeli. Did you not "choose" your party, as you express it, as a trader chooses the town or the street of the town in which he will carry on his trade? "Here, and not there, is the better opening; here, not there, is the greater demand for my services; in this quarter rather than that shall I be secure against competition."

LORD B. Do you mean, then, to suggest that my political professions of faith were insincere?

PEEL. Not all of them, certainly, for you professed and felt the strongest possible belief in yourself, and in that faith I know you never wavered.

LORD B. But my political theories? Do you decline to regard them as honestly formed and held?

PEEL. They were far too vague and uncommitting

to allow you to plead their sincerity in proof of your own. Any man can boast of fidelity to principles which need not compromise him with anybody; their very vagueness removes all temptation to disavow them. You borrowed something from the creed of every party, and from out of scraps of the jargon of each you composed a sort of "Abracadabra" of your own. The author of the *Revolutionary Epick*, could always have allied himself without inconsistency with an extreme Revolutionary party, just as the author of Mr. Disraeli's political romances could have found ample warrant in them for throwing in his lot with the Tories. I am willing to grant that you may have had a certain amount of sincere sympathy with both parties, and if your final adherence to the Conservatives had been determined by a preponderance of sympathy on that side, I should have nothing to say. But was it so? Ask your own conscience.

LORD B. It is not in the habit of waiting to be asked before replying to a question of that kind. I had no idea, Sir Robert, that you had so grievously mistaken the meaning of my career as to suppose that it was shaped in its beginnings by sympathy with any opinions. Its shaping influence was antagonism—a sincere hatred which I had always felt and consistently expressed, and which my approving conscience assures me to have been my determinant motive at the turning-point of my career.

PEEL. Your conscience is liberal in its approval of motives ; but I allow that a sincere hatred would have explained your action in '46 more worthily than my own reading of it. I cannot credit you, however, with an honest detestation of myself. It was the manifest simulation of your righteous wrath against me which rendered it so odious in my eyes and in those of my sympathisers.

LORD B. It distresses me to hear you say so. Pray let us get from persons to principles, or, at any rate, to classes. With regard to them, indeed, I may, at any rate, lay claim to consistency. In which of my romances, or in what speech which I have ever delivered, can you find anything but an implacable hostility to the commercial middle class—to the manufacturers and mercantile capitalists who succeeded to the political influence of the territorial aristocracy in 1832? For them I had never a good word ; in *Sybil*, in *Coningsby*, you shall look for any such word in vain. For them, and for the self-seeking designs with which I believed, and in great measure still believe, them to have taken up the Free Trade cause—for the men with the cry of "Cheap Bread!" on their lips, and the whisper of "Cheap Labour!" in their hearts—I had the deepest and most disinterested repugnance. And it was not till you stood forth as their representative that my enmity against them took a form of apparent animosity to you.



PEEL. Whether apparent or real, Lord Beaconsfield, it was not reciprocated. I say again that I feel no animosity towards you, and never did. You will do me the justice to remember that I showed none, either at the time of our encounter or afterwards. I will leave you to determine why. But in all my personal records of my life you will not find your attacks upon me so much as mentioned. My diaries preserve complete silence on the subject. ●

LORD B. An interesting fact, indeed, and your clear recollection of it makes it all the more impressive. It shows at once that the silence on which you pride yourself must have been a genuine manifestation of indifference, and not a forced simulation of disdain.

PEEL. I do not pretend to indifference. I felt your blows acutely, I will not deny. But imputations upon character can be met with dignity in only one of two ways: by instant disproof, or by persistent disregard. It was impossible, from the nature of the case, to refute such charges as yours, and it would, therefore, have been unworthy of me to resent them. I was content to refer the issue between us to the judgment of the good and wise among my countrymen.

LORD B. It was a stately resolve, Sir Robert, and one eminently befitting a character for which, believe me, I have always entertained a sincere respect. Such appeals to the national justice and

virtue are most laudable. The appellant in such cases, however, should be careful to do one thing.

PEEL. And that is?

LORD B. To live till the cause comes on for hearing. Appeals of this sort fall, unfortunately, under the lawyer's rule, that *Actio personalis moritur cum personâ*; and in politics there is no Lord Campbell's Act to mitigate the operation of the maxim. You recollect Lord Campbell, Sir Robert, though not, perhaps, by his title. Yes, you would just remember his rise. A most interesting study, though a Scotchman—perhaps because a Scotchman. Quite the Wedderburn of the nineteenth century.

PEEL. I recollect; but you were about to say——

LORD B. I was about to remind you that you committed the error of dying before your cause came on. In the case of Peel, appellant, *versus* Disraeli, respondent, judgment went by default in the respondent's favour.

PEEL. It is not so. History will do me right.

LORD B. History? Oh, that is another matter. That is a court in which we can all of us get white-washed. There the advocate disguises himself as a judge, and the worse one's case is, the more eager he is to advance his reputation by taking it up. But I thought your appeal lay to the proper tribunal. What I supposed you to be looking for was a *viva voce* recognition, so to speak, of your political integrity and your great public services; not such

approbation as history whispers in the ear of the student, but such as resounds throughout an empire in the voice of national acclaim. I imagined that it was your ambition to live, not in the dead annals of the chronicler, but in the daily discourse and cogitation of living men.

PEEL. Well, and am I so utterly forgotten ?

LORD B. By the professors, no ; by the people, yes. No statesman's name is more rarely on their lips than yours. Even the Liberals, who owe so much to you, neglect your memory. Seldom, indeed, did they mention you in my later lifetime, except it was to sharpen some blunt-pointed taunt against me. And since my departure I have superseded you even as a whetstone. It is no longer Peel, but Beaconsfield, who is held up to the political world as the example of wise and statesmanlike Conservatism—I, the adventurer, the charlatan, the un-English ! Widely as we differ on many subjects, Sir Robert, we might find a point of contact here. So ludicrous an illustration of the value of the thing called "public opinion" might unite us, merely as men of the world, in the sympathy of contempt.

PEEL. To find your enjoyment in it one must have your cynicism, and I have it not. To me the fact is melancholy and ominous—far more so than what you tell me about my own unremembered name. I had ten times rather that the people

should have forgotten me than that they should have forgiven you. .

LORD B. Yet why? Both acts have their origin in the same defect of faculty ; and neither deserves more praise or blame than belongs to mere shortness of memory. *Amnesty*, after all, is only the Greek for forgetfulness.

PEEL. Ay, but there are political sins—if there are not political services—which merit an eternity of remembrance.

LORD B. No doubt: but they don't get it. Practically there is but one inexpressible sin in politics, and but one way of atoning for the expiable. You blundered, Sir Robert—excuse my freedom—you blundered more than once in your policy ; but the stumble most fatal to your posthumous reputation was that of your horse on Constitution Hill. I, on the other hand, had I committed far more errors than you did, should have atoned for them all by that one consummate stroke of statesmanship—the completion of my seventy-fifth year. Nothing, depend upon it, is more politic than longevity. Its effects may not be so startling and brilliant as are produced by the “early death of promise ;” but they are infinitely more assured and lasting. After all, it sooner or later occurs to people that the young Marcellus might have turned out a failure. But if one is not to die in the first blush of political youth, it is essential to last well into the seventies. Once

the attractions of adolescence have been lost, one is bound to live until the dignity of old age has been won. The hurried departure of a sexagenarian, in the full freshness, perhaps, of some political reverse, has a touch of the ludicrous about it, like the premature farewell of a middle-aged prima-donna under the discouragement of a bronchial attack. It is wanting alike in discretion and in romance.

PEEL. If statesmanship is to be tested by tenacity of life, you left a greater statesman behind you.

LORD B. I admit it, with regret. He has surpassed my political achievements by fourteen years—for the difference in our ages is too slight to matter. But our cases are exceptional. Our antagonism took so dramatic a form at last, that our reputations reacted upon and supported each other, and the memory of the dead statesman was in a certain sense perpetuated by every characteristic act of his survivor. My own humble merit was to have lived long enough to fix that idea of dramatic antagonism in the public mind—to have established myself as the typical opponent of that form of Radicalism with which Mr. Gladstone's name was associated.

PEEL. That *form* of Radicalism! Yes, the expression is a well-chosen one. Radicalism proper, you mean, as distinguished from Tory Democracy.

LORD B. I congratulate you, Sir Robert, on the

correctness of your vocabulary.\* Under serious disadvantage you seem to have kept yourself well abreast of the terminology of the time.

PEEL. You overrate the achievement, my lord. Tory Democracy is not quite the modern affair, even in your hands, that you seem to suggest. Your romances familiarised us with the idea, if not with the name, of the thing, and when the malice of Fate permitted you to dispose of the future of our country, the full drift of your youthful theories was made plain to the dullest mind. *Sybil* and *Coningsby* may have shrouded their meaning under rhetorical phrases, but there was no coy concealment about the "Representation of the People Act, 1867."

LORD B. I did not venture to hope that that legislation would be to your taste. Your own policy was essentially pedestrian. You were not capable—forgive me, we have all of us the defects of our qualities—you were not capable of the statesmanship of the imagination.

PEEL. No, thank God!

LORD B. Resignation, perhaps, would be a more becoming mood than gratitude. There *is* a statesmanship of the imagination.

PEEL. I do not dispute that for a moment. I could not, with such a professor before me.

LORD B. Yes; and the unimaginative variety stands related to it as astronomy—

PEEL. \*To astrology?

LORD B. As astronomy of the pre-Newtonian to astronomy of the post-Newtonian era. Imaginative statesmanship is simply another name for statesmanship armed with the power of scientific prediction. In 1867 it was possible to compute the—— But you smile. May I ask to be admitted to the secret of your amusement?

PEEL. I was smiling, not at the scientific statesmanship of 1867, but at its contrast with that of the previous year. The Newton of politics, whoever he may be, must have arisen, laboured, and departed in the Parliamentary recess of 1866. But surely your "leap in the dark" must have vividly, if not quite pleasantly, recalled the memories of twenty years before. Surely it must have awakened recollections of that performance of my own in 1846, of which you were the most unsparing critic.

LORD B. It did, indeed, but by way of contrast rather than comparison. Leaps should be taken, according at least to the best traditions of the hunting-field, in company with one's horse. The most conspicuous feature in yours was, if you will excuse my saying so, that you left your steed on the other side of the hedge. I, on the other hand, succeeding to your seat, on the selfsame animal, contrived—— But why pursue a comparison which must be painful to you?

PEEL. Nay, I will complete it myself. You put your horse, you would say, at a still bigger fence

than the one he had refused, and you "finished the run" on his back.

LORD B. Exactly.

PEEL. I do not deny it. I never did deny the superiority of your jockeyship. And if that were all, if a statesman owed no other duty to his country and his conscience than to outwit his political opponents; if the achievement of a party triumph by the shameless adoption and the reckless extension of an adversary's principles is to——

LORD B. Pardon my interrupting you, Sir Robert; but your information upon posthumous politics, excellent as it is for the most part, is in this instance at fault. You seem to be confusing the parts in the drama of 1867. The principles which you describe as "shamelessly adopted" and "recklessly extended," were not my adversary's, but my own; while, on the other hand, the party manœuvre was not mine, but my chief's. I was not the proselyte of Democratic Toryism, but its missionary—the "educator," as I preferred to call it, of the Conservatives in the doctrine and practice of that faith. It was I—as you flatter me by remembering—I, and not Lord Derby, who was the author of *Sybil* and *Coningsby*; and, on the other hand, it was Lord Derby and not I who sang that historic pæan of exultation over the "dishing of the Whigs."

PEEL. Such distinctions between leader and lieutenant would hardly have served a rival of yours had



it suited you once more to head a party revolt. Again we should have heard the sarcasm about the theft of the Whig bathers' clothes.

LORD B. Excuse me, I was never in the habit of repeating my humble epigrams; and the repetition in this case would have been singularly inappropriate. The Whig clothes! Why, the Whigs themselves stood aghast at us in our strange and unrecognised apparel. And well they might, for it was not ~~the~~ stolen attire of Lord Russell or Mr. Gladstone, or even of Mr. Bright, but the cast-off costume of Vivian Grey. Yes, the peers and the plutocrats, the grandees of the shires and the magnates of the City, these it was whom I watched defile before me arrayed in the fantastic habiliments of my youth; and if there was any humiliation about the business, it was theirs and not mine.

PEEL. I do not defend them; far from it. They betrayed their trust—a trust committed to them by the country and trafficked away by them for a party victory. You boast of having educated them in your principles; but you have just recalled to me—and I thank you for the reminder—that it was Lord Derby who talked of “dishing the Whigs.” Which teaching, think you, had the most influence upon your pupils,—that of the political theorist who talked to them about striking new low-lying strata of Conservatism, or that of the practical politicians who pointed out to them their opportunity of outbidding

and outwitting their adversaries, and bade them use it?

LORD B. Oh, the schoolmaster had very efficient ushers; he has never denied that. But surely, Sir Robert, your analysis of the situation is a little unjust. You altogether omit the element of popular agitation, and of the natural, the most proper, the truly patriotic desire of a Conservative party to give peace to the land.

PEEL. Where was there any agitation for household suffrage? For a measure of reform—yes: though even the demonstrations in that behalf—a few noisy meetings in the provinces, and the levelling of the railings of a London park—were mere child's play to what we both of us remember. I abandoned Protection under pressure of an impending famine; I assented to the emancipation of the Catholics before the menace of civil war. But you, my lord, to what did *you* surrender in 1867? What popular demand was there which would not have been satisfied, nay, which would not have been amply satisfied, by a far less revolutionary measure than you proposed and carried?

LORD B. The Opposition were bent on tripping up our heels. Had we stopped short of Household Suffrage, a defeat of Ministers and a dissolution of Parliament would have followed.

PEEL. Yes; and the Liberals might perhaps have returned from the polls with a still larger majority.

But what then? Would it not have been ten times better for the country, ay, and in the long run for the Conservatives, if they had? Do you, of all men, pretend to so little knowledge of the Liberal party as to think that their zeal for progress is in direct proportion to the strength of their Parliamentary position? The ratio of variation is inverse. Had they come back strengthened from the elections, the Reform dose would not have been administered to the country out of the ample table-spoon of the Radical; it would have been doled out from the minim-glass of the Whig.

LORD B. And how long would the patient have been satisfied with it?

PEEL. How long! A generation, twenty years, ten years: who knows? But who knows, either, how much might have been gained by even the shortest of these pauses on the Democratic path? And what kind of Conservatism is that which does not appreciate the inestimable advantage of substituting gradual for sudden change?

LORD B. The answer is simple. It is the Conservatism of practical intelligence as distinguished from the Conservatism of mere sentiment and tradition. Whether gradual or sudden change is best depends upon circumstances. The change from an untenable to a tenable position can never be too sudden. And if new political forces have to be recognised—forces which you must learn to control

or they will destroy you—how should the recognition of them be gradual? You cannot learn to control them till you set them free to work, and the sooner you liberate the sooner will you have mastered them.

PEEL. Phrases! phrases! Is the position of your party tenable now? And can they control, or, for the matter of that, could you control the forces which you called into being? For a time I know you persuaded your party that you could; but the dream of 1874 had the awakening of 1880, and in what plight did we find them then? They were an army without flag or commander, or even plan of campaign. You had untaught them their old methods of warfare, and they could not pick up the trick of the new. The generals of division were without authority; and a rabble of subalterns, but one of whom had even the excuse of Vivian Grey's youth for crediting himself with that adventurer's genius, fought for your broken bâton. They have rallied since, I admit, but to what? To a bastard, semi-Socialist Radicalism. What an outlook!

LORD B. Sir Robert Peel an alarmist!

PEEL. Not so. I have faith in a fundamental Conservatism permeating the entire English people; but you must go deep down to reach it; and much that we prize may be dug up and shovelled aside before the Radical digger strikes that bed-rock with his spade. As to the middle classes there is not, and never has been, any fear. *Their* interests, at any rate,

I always understood ; and I see many worthy exponents of them among your own colleagues. Inefficient administrator as you were—and no statesman of your mark was ever so inefficient—you knew how to choose men capable in administration. The chief departments of the State under your Government were all respectably and some admirably filled. Your Chancellor of the Exchequer, your First Lord of the Admiralty, your Secretary for War, were men whom I should have chosen myself. But one cannot live by administration alone ; and what mark did you make on national policy ? What tradition of legislation did you leave behind you to strengthen your successors, and to let your countrymen know to whom and to what they might turn when the season of alarm should come ? You left nothing of the kind. The history of your six years of rule can scarcely be said to form a part of your country's story. It was a mere digression into foreign politics. Your Government lived upon an episode and died of its conclusion. The nation, wishing at last to return to its own affairs, displaced you ; and when your downfall proved that you had alienated the classes through whom I was wont to govern, without securing more than a fleeting popularity among the masses whom you boasted your ability to lead, I should have thought that not only would your reputation by this time have perished, but that it would have been the indignant hands of your own—I cannot call it our own—party

which would have laid bare its imposture to the world.

LORD B. And you would really have thought so, Sir Robert? How strange, then, is the irony of circumstance! It was the very hands you speak of, which, instead of unmasking the Minister, unveiled his statue; and they now load its pedestal, on every anniversary of his death-day, with memorial wreaths.

## XII

### FIELDING AND RICHARDSON

RICH. Sir! Mr. Fielding! This is mighty ill manners! I would have you to know, sir, that I prefer my own company to yours.

FIELD. I cannot believe it. Death does not so change men's natures. Your known conviviality of disposition——

RICH. Again, sir! You pass all bounds! 'Tis strange that you should suppose yourself entitled to use this freedom with me. Were we on earth, I should impute your rudeness to an excitement, in which you were said to indulge yourself something too freely.

FIELD. I know you would: and as a backbiter you deserve to be pitied for the loss of so useful a tooth.

RICH. I shall suffer less by my loss, Mr. Fielding. I am well assured, than you will by yours.

FIELD. Perhaps so; but you will suffer in the same way. Tea and tittle-tattle must be almost as bad to do without as a bottle of Burgundy and a rousing

catch ; though I dare swear, by the way, that you manage to get the most favourite of all your drinks even down here.

RICH. I know not what you would be at, sir.

FIELD. There is a beverage which intoxicates more hurtfully than wine, and makes a greater fool of the drinker. Ladies' parlours are its taverns and old maids its tapsters. *You* know its taste, Mr. Richardson—no man better, its name is flattery.

RICH. 'Tis in vain, sir, that you would attempt by ridicule to make me ashamed of having earned the approbation of virtuous women. If that is your object, let me tell you that——

FIELD. That my object, Mr. Richardson ! You are vastly mistaken. The praises bestowed upon you by virtuous women, so far from exciting my ridicule, inspired me with emulation. I sought to rival you among the other sex, and began the composition of *Joseph Andrews* in the hope of winning the approbation of virtuous men.

RICH. I marvel, Mr. Fielding, that you should have the hardihood to speak of that offence against morality and good manners. Ah, sir, you have much to answer for in so thoughtless an endeavour—for thoughtless I hope it was—to raise a laugh against chastity.

FIELD. The chastity which a laugh could put out of countenance is not worth much. But, for my own part, I see nothing more ridiculous in the manly



continence of Joseph than in the virginal purity of his sister.

RICH. Then you were unfortunate, sir, in your manner of describing it. *The Adventures of Joseph Andrews*—I speak from hearsay only, for I confess I never had the patience to read the book—did more to divert than edify the town.

FIELD. I am not to answer for the levity of my readers. It is enough to provide them with a serious moral; the seriousness to profit by it they must find for themselves. Besides, sir, you are setting up a ticklish test of the morality of authors. I have seen an unthinking reader smile over the sufferings of Mrs. Pamela.

RICH. That is like enough, sir. Your acquaintance lay chiefly among those who would naturally make a jest of virtue. A work of morality, however, is not to be judged by its effects on the rake-hells of Covent Garden.

FIELD. No; nor by its acceptance among the precise spinsters of Fleet Street. If the one be beyond the reach of reform, the others are beyond the need of it. I think we may fairly lay both of them out of the account.

RICH. Nay, sir; I may boast, at any rate, of having confirmed the virtuous in their virtue: while you were doing all that lay in your power to cocker the vicious in their vice.

FIELD. 'Fore Gad, Mr. Richardson, there is one

virtue to which you do not seem to show much favour; though the Scripture tells us, I think, that charity is the greatest of them all.

RICH. Charity, sir! Charity! I—I—find nothing to—— But, no! I was wrong. The warmth of our dispute betrayed me into error. I had no right to charge you with any deliberate design of corrupting morals, and I ask your pardon.

FIELD. Say no more, Mr. Richardson! You are an honest little fellow, with all your——

RICH. Sir! Mr. Fielding!

FIELD. Pray excuse me. A warmth of another kind has betrayed me into error. I should have said, sir, that I did not need this proof of your generosity and Christian spirit. You do me no more than justice, however. I have never knowingly left a line unblotted which I thought could injure the cause of morality, though, I own, I believed I could serve it better by describing men and women as I saw them rather than as I could have wished them to be. After all, Mr. Richardson, we live among realities. It is among them that virtue has to be practised; and I doubt whether it is possible to teach it by examples drawn from a wholly ideal world, where the personages live and move as it were in another and different element altogether. As soon might one understand the art of swimming by watching men perform its movements, belly downwards, on a bowling-green. The men and women of my romances may not all of them swim

like Leander, but they are at least in the water, and worth watching on that account.

RICH. Your parable, if you mean to apply it to the most ingenious of your romances, is indeed a rash one. Your hero there is assuredly no Leander.

FIELD. My hero no Leander! (I forbear to laugh, you see, though there are few things more diverting than gravity stumbling on a clench.) No, sir; Tom is certainly no Leander: his head is pretty often under water before he contrives to make his way to the haven of his Sophia's arms. But he gets there, however; he does not sink; he swims.

RICH. Swims! Mr. Fielding! Nay, sir, he struggles somehow to land, and that is all. He is a profligate roisterer—I speak from report, sir, for I would not have you to suppose that I have read his adventures—who is altogether unworthy of the beautiful and virtuous young gentlewoman (as she is described to me) who rewards him with her hand: and what sort of lesson in morality is that, I would ask?

FIELD. No better than life affords us, sir, I grant you that. I never could bring myself to improve upon the instructions which the great Disposer of events vouchsafes to His creatures.

RICH. I grieve, sir, that you should add impiety to license. Providence does not reward the vicious as you have dared to do.

FIELD. What? Do you mean to tell me that all

the loose fellows are condemned to marry ugly women? Or is it Sophy's virtue that they have to do without—as indeed they have but too often made shift to do in their wilder days?

RICH. Your talk, sir, is becoming something too free for my taste; but you are only affecting to misunderstand me. The Almighty may well allow vice to prosper in this life, if such be His inscrutable will, seeing that He has the power of rewards and punishments after death: but a writer of romances has but this world to deal with. His judgment-day is in his last chapter, and the good must be rewarded and the evil punished before he pens his "Finis," or not at all.

FIELD. True enough, sir; but if you believe in the infinite mercy of the Supreme Being—you need not interrupt me; I see you do, from your manner—you ought not to be so shocked at the leniency of the romancer. He also, if I may say it without irreverence, is a creator: and none can know so well as he what allowances are to be made for the infirmities of his creatures.

RICH. I have no patience, sir, with such profane trifling. Do you not encourage youth to believe that recklessness and riotous living, dicing and drinking, chambering and wantonness, are, after all, but venial irregularities, and that if a man be but bold and open-handed, good-natured and good-humoured with it all, he shall come to no great harm? And is not that corrupting?

FIELD. Is it more 'corrupting than life itself? I protest, sir, that I cannot see it. If good and evil impulses be mixed in all men, and if their fellows see that sometimes the good is allowed in this life to atone for the evil, shall we say that those who are rather emboldened by contemplating the impunity of vice than humbled by observing how lamentably it defaces and chequers virtue, have been corrupted by the world? Or that they are self-corrupters? Unless we give the latter account of them, we must declare, as I said but now, that divine mercy is itself an instrument in the demoralisation of mankind.

RICH. You seem mighty well content, sir, with that sophism, but it cannot serve you. I must remind you again that you did not stand towards your characters as a man stands towards his fellow, but on another foot. You were, as you said with too little reverence, their creator, and you were also their judge. Why did you shrink, then, from making a wholesome example? Why teach young men that vice may escape punishment and even attain to happiness? How can you tell but that many a youth may have been tempted to intrigue with a Lady Bellaston—if that is the hussy's name—while yet hoping to be rewarded with a Sophia Western at last?

FIELD. Well, Mr. Richardson, and why teach waiting-maids that virtue will always be rewarded by £10,000 a year and a couple of country houses?

How can you tell but that many an ambitious abigail, disappointed of becoming the wife of her first amorous master, has jumped at the situation of mistress to the second?

RICH. Sir, I see no pertinence in your question.

FIELD. Do you not? It seems to me very much to the point. I cannot see that virtue is any better served by feigning a false certainty for its earthly prizes than by teaching men what is strictly true—that it need not despair of its recompense, even though it be mingled with vice. Besides, sir, to come back to my old position, how is it possible for a faithful delineator of human life to do otherwise than as I have done? Are not good and evil mingled in life, and are not those who look upon life—I speak not now of boarding-school misses, but of men and women of the world—are they not, I say, perpetually conscious of the mixture? Do they not see too that the tares and wheat—or is it tares and oats? no! wheat—tares and wheat are allowed to grow together until the harvest, and that the tares sometimes flourish a plaguy deal better than the wheat? If they do see all these things in life, they would not recognise the romancer's picture if it omitted them all.

RICH. I am amazed, sir, at the shallowness of such reasoning. Good and evil are indeed mingled in this life; but it is not, therefore, for an honest and Christian writer to fling down the things and persons

of this world chance-medley before his readers, like so much unsorted goods, and leave them to pick out the fair or foul, as best suits their taste. It is his duty, sir, to put them upon contemplating only what is good, and to encourage them to the pursuit of it by showing what advantages it brings.

FIELD. Is that his duty? Then, egad, let him throw aside his pen and quit his closet, clap on a cassock and bands and get him 'to the pulpit, for that, 'sir, is the proper place for him. Once there, however, he will do better to drop this life altogether so far as rewards and punishments are concerned, and to seek to fortify the virtuous and alarm the vicious, by dwelling 'on the comforts of a good conscience and the agonies of an evil one, on the joys of heaven and the terrors of hell. That, Mr. Richardson, is his business—the business of a man whose concern is with the future world, and not like my own, as I conceived it, with the present.

RICH. I cannot believe it either necessary or right to divide one of these concerns from the other. It was my own endeavour—in which I humbly trust to have succeeded—to write both for a future and for the present world. I was insensible, I hope, to the vanity of authorship, and deemed it by far a higher honour to have been a teacher of morals than an inventor of romances. But I judged, and I think rightly, that I could do more for morality as a delineator of life than as a pulpit homilist.

FIELD. Why, then, did you make a pulpit homilist of yourself? Plague take it, Mr. Richardson, a pulpit is but a wooden box, and an armchair will serve one's turn as well at a pinch. You preached sitting instead of standing, and hammered out your periods over an escritoire instead of thumping them out on a velvet cushion. But preacher you were always, and delineator of life, never. I doubt, indeed, whether you ever saw more of it than could be seen from your shop door: but whatever you saw of it, you never drew it.

RICH. Never drew it! No delineator of life! Mr. Fielding, you are uncivil.

FIELD. Am I? I thought you set so little store by your fame as an author that you would take it as a compliment to be regarded solely as a preacher of morals. •

RICH. No man takes it as a compliment, sir, to hear that he has failed in anything which he has attempted. However, I need not allow myself to be vexed by your mean opinion of my writings: nor will I. I thank Heaven that a man's reputation is not to be made or marred to all time by the wits of Covent Garden. There are others, sir, besides the coxcombs who were scrambling for the chair of Dryden, to whose judgment——

FIELD. Mr. Richardson! Mr. Richardson! I beg of you to compose yourself. Such earthly trifles as the fame of ingenious authorship are beneath the



care of a moralist. Besides, as you have well said, there is nothing which need vex you in the expression of my poor opinion. I never laid claim to the chair of glorious John, out of which indeed I should have first had to hoist a heavy——

RICH. You are right there, sir, and I spoke in forgetfulness. The seat of John Dryden was filled, and well filled, at the time when we two entered the court of letters.

FIELD. Well filled indeed! amply, tightly filled, Mr. Richardson; and by a judge, too, as much your friend as he was my enemy.

RICH. I know not in what sense you can call him your enemy, but I accept with pride the title of his friend. I am prouder indeed of Dr. Johnson's friendship than even of his praise.

FIELD. The one, maybe, had a good deal to do with the other. If report speaks truly, you were the greater Samuel's banker.

RICH. I have given no man a right to circulate any such report.

FIELD. Of that I am sure. You were as much too magnanimous to speak of your benefactions as the Doctor was too generous to conceal them. I say that in all sincerity, believe me. Your left hand, I dare swear, would never have known what your right hand had done, had he not come between them and let out the secret. But there it is: you were the great censor's friend in need.

RICH. And what if I were, sir? Would you charge one of the proudest and most upright of men with corrupt motives?

FIELD. Not I, faith! The old bear was as honest as one of his own hugs. But then his heart was as warm as his skin, and he was full of good will to all who showed him any kindness. You had proved your friendship to him in the most effectual of fashions—by lending him money. With me he had but slight acquaintance, and if we had improved it I should probably have borrowed money of him. What wonder, then, if his critical foot-rule should have meted to you a little fuller, and to me a little shorter, measure than we deserved?

RICH. Suppose him, then, to have been somewhat disbalanced by partiality; he is not the only admired critic who has thought highly of my work. One of the ingenious, though, I lament to say, atheistical, editors of the Encyclopedia has spoken of me in language which too many will regard as that of extravagant laudation. Mr. Diderot has ventured to compare me with our immortal Shakespeare.

FIELD. Mr. Diderot had better settle the value of that compliment with his friend Mr. Voltaire. For if I mistake not, he commends you for that very quality of cultivation in which Mr. Voltaire dared to find our illustrious countrymen deficient. But I do not know, after all, that the Frenchman's compliment is inconsistent with my censure.

RICH. Nay, sir, how can that be? Was Shakespeare no delineator of life?

FIELD. Not in the humble sense in which I lay claim to that title for myself. I studied the men and women among whom I moved, and strove to represent their lineaments with fidelity on my canvas. I drew from the life and with my models always before me. Shakespeare had surveyed all life and had his models by heart if he had cared to work in that fashion. But when he sat down to write he looked within and found there the imaginative types of perfect form upon which he worked. I drew my characters as Reynolds painted his portraits, but Shakespeare created his as Phidias modelled his Jove.

RICH. To what does all this tend, Mr. Fielding? Am I really to conclude that you are ascribing the superior mode of workmanship to me?

FIELD. You are fluttered, I see, by the mere anticipation; but it is a correct one. You did not study from the life, though perhaps you thought you did, but you had a certain power of imagining types. It was not, I am sorry to say, till I had roundly ridiculed you that I found it out: but I confessed it when I did. For your *Clarissa Harlowe* I had a great value, and you will do me the justice to remember that I was not slow to express it. You possessed deep insight, sir, into the female heart, and in one instance you have most powerfully

idealised the wickedness of a man. It matters nothing that neither *Clarissa* nor *Lovelace* are representations of any possible human being; they have a truth of their own. I should like to say the same of *Pamela*, but I cannot. She is neither an ideal waiting-maid nor a real one.

RICH. What! sir; you profess to find no reality in *Pamela*?

FIELD. My experience of her is in two respects the reverse of Mr. B.'s. I find her neither of flesh and blood, nor resisting to the touch. Come, Mr. Richardson, is there any truth to nature in the preaching little baggage, or in her sanctified parents—hedgers and ditchers with a longer string of long words in their mouths than they had ever had onions. Is there any reason and probability in her restraint by the wicked Mrs. Jukes? Can we believe in the real inability of so virtuous a maiden to escape from so ill-guarded a prison? Or in the sudden conversion of so hardened a profligate as her master?

RICH. I see no great violation of probability, sir, in any of these things. I know not why a squire or a waiting-maid should not comport themselves as they do in *Pamela*.

FIELD. Then take the word of a squire who has had some experience of waiting-maids, that they would not. One would have been less pertinacious or the other more approachable. And what do you think of *Lovelace*? Do you suppose that the rake-hells

of Covent Garden, as you call them, numbered any such audacious and triumphant villain among them as he?

RICH. The selfishness of long self-indulgence, sir, and the insolence of rank and wealth, and the visitation of God upon a godless life, may produce, nay, I think they must produce, a Lovelace.

FIELD. Ay, as hatred and suspicion and callous contempt for his kind may produce the undoer of Othello. But for all that, I should not expect to meet with an Iago on the Piazza at Venice, and I can assure you that you would meet no Lovelace at its namesake in Covent Gardèn. The spot is too near Bow Street for that.

RICH. You mean that——

FIELD. I meant, sir, to remind you that I had been a magistrate as well as a writer, and that in the former of these characters I should have made short work of the most famous of your personages. One of my runners would have laid "Captain" Lovelace and his lawless lieutenants by the heels in a very short time. What! to abduct a young lady of quality under pretence of escorting her to the house of a kinswoman, and then to detain her for weeks against her will, to say nothing of attempting and finally accomplishing yet worse outrages—and all this to go on unchecked under the very noses of his Majesty's commission of the peace! Upon my conscience, Mr. Richardson, your magistrates

and constabulary vastly needed a call over the coals.

RICH. On such a matter, sir, you speak with an authority which it does not become me to question.

FIELD. Believe, then, on that authority, sir, that no such man as Lovelace was possible in England in the reign of his gracious Majesty George II., and still less so, I suppose, at any time since. Nor do I know whether one could have met with so unredeemed a scoundrel in any country or time. But one may say the same of the blacker villains of Shakespeare; and it does not prevent Lovelace from possessing what I have already allowed to him—a reality of his own. His is a powerfully conceived and awe-striking figure of the Satanic sort, as Clarissa is a most affecting picture in the angelic order of portraiture, and both of them deserved to live. Have I atoned, Mr. Richardson, for speaking of you as no delineator of life?

RICH. You have, at any rate, said some vastly civil things, sir, and I thank you for them. My regret is the greater that I cannot return your civilities in kind. But I could not honestly say anything in praise of *Tom Jones*, which is—I mean, which I understand to be—your masterpiece; and I know you would not have me sacrifice conscience to courtesy.

FIELD. Not for the world, Mr. Richardson: particularly when I should derive so little pleasure from what would give you so much pain. I will strive to

do without your good opinion on my writings, consoling myself as best I may by the imaginative contemplation of my effigy.

RICH. Hey? what? What say you, Mr. Fielding?—your effigy?

FIELD. 'Tis even so, sir. How does your friend, the great Doctor, turn it?

See nations slowly wise and meanly just  
To buried merit raise the tardy bust;  
If dreams . . .

But what ails you, Mr. Richardson? You seem agitated.

RICH. 'Tis nothing, sir—nothing. But I confess I had thought that . . .

FIELD. You hardly need tell me what. But, plague take it, sir, these empty honours can profit us nothing.

RICH. True, Mr. Fielding, very true—

Can storied urn or animated bust  
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?  
Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust?  
Or flattery soothe the dull cold ear of death?

My venerable friend Dr. Johnson thought meanly of Mr. Gray, I remember, but to me he seemed to have considerable merit.

FIELD. He can put unpleasant questions, at any rate, if that be a merit in a poet.

RICH. A bust is not wanted by any man who lives in the memory of his countrymen.

FIELD. And useless to any man who does not.

RICH. I refrained, Mr. Fielding, from adding that.

FIELD. Why did you, then? It is your own consolation on the want of a statue. You are not mocked, and I am.

RICH. I do not understand you.

FIELD. I will whisper my meaning, so that it may not get abroad; for you keep your court of admirers here, though I do not. They have raised a statue to me, and for aught I know they may raise one to you; but *they do not read either of us*.

RICH. Great Heaven! You jest, Mr. Fielding!

FIELD. Not now. I have given it up. I did all my jesting on earth, and I am afraid that my works are suffering for it.

RICH. Ah! I perceive how it stands with you, sir. It is as I feared. Your freedoms have excluded you from polite hands. I always somewhat marvelled at the hardihood of gentlewomen in my own day, who could be seen perusing your works. But the neglect of my own romances, which were thought to have done so much for the cause, is both strange and mortifying.

FIELD. Nevertheless, it is complete, or so I am assured on the best authority. They tell me that a young woman would be almost as likely to be seen giggling over the temptations of Joseph Andrews as fluttering over the trials of Pamela. As to the men, I am perhaps a little better off than you, for some few



of them have still a certain acquaintance with me, and the others think it right to pretend it. But for the ladies, Mr. Richardson—well, we must do our best to console each other with the reflection that since they are too straitlaced to relish my romances, they may, perhaps, be too virtuous to need your sermons.

### XIII

## EDMUND BURKE AND EDWARD HORSMAN

BURKE. You have spoken eloquently, sir, in praise of eloquence ; but I confess that the more I consider the subject, the more I wonder that oratory should ever have been regarded as an art worth cultivation by men of affairs. Its forensic successes on the great scale are indeed well known, and those of the minor sort are of everyday occurrence ; but you will look in vain for any record of its achievements in the history of States. What great orator of ancient or modern times has ever saved his political party or triumphed over his political opponents, turned his countrymen from the path of danger, or guided them into the way of wisdom, by his eloquence alone ? Did Demosthenes succeed in rousing the Athenians against Philip ? Was it Cicero the orator or Cæsar the soldier who had his way at Rome ? Did the elder Pitt contrive to save his country from the crime and folly of the American war ? Or was I—if I may

without immodesty cite myself—was I any happier in the same attempt? I deny not that Demosthenes and Cicero may have achieved many objects for which they laboured; the career of Pitt was as a whole transcendently successful; in more than one of my own humble political efforts I have gained my end. But I am forced to believe that in all such cases, whether at Athens or at Rome, or in England, the politician must have had the circumstances for confederates: I cannot indeed doubt it, when I see how completely adverse circumstances are removed from his control. I cannot doubt, I say, that the opinions and wishes of his countrymen must always have favoured him from the outset if he is to succeed; since, whenever the case is reversed, I find him so powerless, even by the utmost exertion of his eloquence, to bend them to his will.

HORS. But is it quite fair, sir, to try political oratory by so severe a test? Are we bound to assume all conditions adverse to its success before we are entitled to assign any value to it as a political instrument?

BURKE. Surely yes. In what other way can we estimate its power? Nay, to what less severe a test do we subject forensic oratory every day? The success of the advocate is measured by the hostility of the tribunal before whom he pleads—whether that hostility be due to the strength of their prejudices or to the weakness of his case. Nor is it deemed any

credit to him to win his cause, unless these conditions are first assumed against him.

HORS. Still, sir, the advocate's task bears no comparison in point of difficulty with that of the politician; the practice of the court to which he appeals is in many cases so vastly in the former's favour. The jury decides after, at the most, a few hours' deliberation; the country may take months or years to consider its decision.

BURKE. So much the worse, no doubt, for the rhetorician, but so much the better for the reasoner. And yet with all this time allowed for his arguments to win their way to the minds of his countrymen, he fails.

HORS. I own, sir, that I do not highly rate the influence of reasoning in political matters, and therefore, that I set no great store by that large allowance of time which is granted to the politician. Most political reasoning is over the heads of the mass of those to whom it is addressed—as, with submission, Mr. Burke, was but too often the case with your own; while that which is comprehensible to their understandings is either superfluous or futile—superfluous if it approves itself to their views of their own interests, futile if it does not.

BURKE. When opposed to the true interests of a country, it is not desirable that any arguments should be successful. But it is the function of sound political reasoning to enable men to distinguish between their

true advantage and its delusive semblance. Are we really to believe that the skilled and upright political orator is incapable of rendering that service to the State? I have already shown you that I am tempted to accept that view myself; but I feel that to adopt it finally would be to despair of political progress.

HORS. I do not perceive that consequence, sir, unless, indeed, we are to assume that the people are mistaken as to their true interests more often than not. On the opposite assumption, their inaccessibility to reasonings which (on such an assumption) must of course be more often than not fallacious, would be a proof of political development. May we not say, indeed, that the main result of all political progress is, or should be, to relieve oratory of its functions? Surely the ideal condition of a community would be that it should perceive its own interests too clearly either to need to be instructed, or to be capable of being misled.

BURKE. An ideal condition, in truth! Has it yet been reached in England?

HORS. No, indeed! very far from it. We have, in my judgment, receded instead of advancing.

BURKE. May I ask, sir, without impertinence, whether you are a Tory?

HORS. You may ask, Mr. Burke, with all my heart; and I only wish that in the present era of political transition I could answer your question either to your satisfaction or my own. Perhaps I may help myself

by asking one of you in my turn. May I inquire whether you are a Whig?

BURKE. Beyond doubt, sir. I was ever the staunch upholder of all the lawful liberties of the people.

HORS. Do you regard it as one among their lawful liberties, then, to exercise political power without any pretensions to political fitness?

BURKE. God forbid!

HORS. It is too late: He has permitted it. But your ejaculation emboldens me to claim for myself the title of Whig. The classes who possess supreme power in England are at present absolutely unfitted to exercise it.

BURKE. And you tell me at the same time that they are impervious to the reasonings of any who seek to instruct them in the wise employment of their power?

HORS. Absolutely impervious: but so, indeed, was the class immediately above them, from whom they received their power—the enfranchised of 1832.

BURKE. This, sir, is worse and worse: for as I understand you, it is the whole of the English middling classes whom you now include in your censure. Was the oratory of reason so entirely powerless even with them?

HORS. I—a—we found it so, Mr. Burke—my friend Mr. Lowe and myself. For two whole years we devoted our whole energies to the endeavour to convince the public of the folly and even the madness

of extending political privilege to the uneducated masses of the people: but in vain. Mr. Lowe, in orations of memorable eloquence, appealed to the witness of antiquity against democracies, while I, if I may say so, exhausted every contemporary topic of argument to the same effect. The country, however, turned a deaf ear to us.

BURKE. Then I do not fully comprehend how the step which was then taken can be in your ~~view~~ regarded as a downward one. The classes who thereupon succeeded to political power could not, on your own showing, have been more unteachable than those into whose inheritance they had entered. The trees cannot do *more* than remain motionless when the political orator attempts to play Orpheus to them.

MORS. Pardon me, Mr. Burke, they can do more and worse. They can dance in the direction of the precipice to the thrummings of another sort of lyre. The English middle-class might be no less deaf to the political counsellor than the mass of the artisan population; but they were far more proof against the arts of the demagogue.

BURKE. What? Is the demagogue a greater power among the new electors than he was among the old? Now indeed do you astonish me. I had thought that you agreed with me in regarding political oratory (and the demagogue, I suppose, has nothing but his tongue to rely on) as a useless art.

HORS. That, Mr. Burke, was only your own contention. Excuse me for reminding you that I never adopted it. I spoke only of the futility of political reasonings: I said nothing as to the power of oratory over men's passions and prejudices; and in so far as he wields that power, the influence of the political orator in England has, of course, indefinitely increased.

BURKE. You mean, I suppose, that the area of its exercise is wider, and the material on which it works more abundant.

HORS. At once more abundant and more plastic. For one man who, in your own time, could be moved to action through his feelings, there are fifty nowadays with whom, beyond the narrow and ill-defined sphere of personal interest, sentiment is the only motive power. For every degree of heat to which popular audiences could be kindled in your days the pocket-thermometer of the contemporary demagogue will register ten times that rise of temperature among his hearers.

BURKE. Such a state of things appears incredible. Among a community so impressionable the English constitution could not, one would think, have survived. By this time it would have given place to the dictatorship of some great orator.

HORS. It has already done so in all but name. The English people laid themselves not many years ago, I am told, at the feet of one man—for no



better reason that any impartial observer could perceive than that he passionately entreated them to do so—and there they have remained ever since.

BURKE. By the people you mean——

HORS. The popular element in the electorate ; for the bulk of the aristocracy, and a large section of the middle class were, always had been, bitterly hostile to him. It was the plebeian vote which lifted him to power : the vote, that is to say, of a class who ~~Not~~ very long before had been loudest in their clamours against him and in their applause of his chief adversary. Yet after a few weeks of electoral campaigning—weeks, indeed, of unwearied labour and incessant strife, hundreds of miles of travel and almost as many yards of speech—he contrived to convert all this hostility into enthusiastic support : so that his opponents, who up to the eve of the election had disputed with one another only as to the uncertain extent of a supposedly certain victory, awoke one morning to find themselves overwhelmed by the most disastrous of defeats.

BURKE. That was oratory indeed ! Describe to me the hero of this extraordinary exploit.

HORS. He was a man well stricken in years, but restless, passionate, impetuous as a youth ; the most ambitious of all men who ever mistook ambition for public spirit, the vainest while believing himself to be the meekest of men ; capable when at the lowest ebb of circumstances of such gigantic efforts

to avenge defeat as I have just described to you, and yet not properly to be described as "equal to either fortune," for he was certainly unequal to the worst. Modest and magnanimous in prosperity, he was in adversity imperious and petulant; accepting success without vain-glory, but resenting failure as a wrong; indifferent to the enjoyment of power, but unable to endure its loss.

BURKE. The qualities you have enumerated are indeed sufficient for the moral equipment, of so unrivalled a demagogue; but you have told me nothing as yet of his intellectual gifts as an orator—of the qualities of his mind and style.

HORS. I shall ask your permission, Mr. Burke, to try an experiment upon you in that matter. I should like you, as an orator yourself, to indicate the qualities of mind and speech which one would expect to find in any great master of the passions of the people.

BURKE. They are easily named. The chief characteristics of such a man's oratory would, I should think, be simplicity, terseness, and homely vigour, and his mind, of course, should be so constituted as to encourage their development and display. His vision of his subject should be intense, but narrow: for since his business is to influence men who habitually see everything in a single aspect, it will be a source of power to him to perceive but one side of a question himself. For the same reason

his arguments should be few in number ; for the popular mind is bewildered by a multitude of reasons, and is apt to distrust those who employ them. It is only by iteration and reiteration of the same topics, with such variety of illustrative treatment as may be, that the convictions of such a tribunal are reached, if reached at all. But the appeal to passion and prejudice, to the natural desires and hatreds of an untaught mob, is always the more powerful instrument of the two ; and what sort of speech this needs is well known. The speaker's words should be plain and few, his manner bluff and honest ; he should be the master of a ready humour, the better if a little coarse ; and he should excel in the mintage of those telling phrases, the embodiments of a truth or a fallacy, which pass into the currency of the market-place and the workshop, and proclaim the sovereignty of an orator as clearly as royalty is recorded in the image and superscription of a coin.

HORS. My experiment has succeeded to admiration. There is scarcely a quality of mind or of oratory among those you have enumerated which is not represented in our great orator by its direct opposite.

BURKE. You cannot mean me to understand you literally ?

HORS. Incredible as it appears to you, I do. Simplicity, terseness, homely vigour, are absolutely antipodean to his style. It is a miracle of involution,

and a portent of verbosity; and, though far from deficient in vigour, one wou'd no more go to it for "homeliness" than to an Act of Parliament. As to the matter of argumentative parsimony, the contrast between the fact and your preconception is more striking still. No popular speaker was ever so lavish of arguments, good, bad, and indifferent, so profuse in their production, and so diffuse in their elaboration. He "iterate~~s~~ and reiterates," it is true, but it is the iteration and reiteration, not of one topic, but of a score; and hence the inordinate length of his harangues. So far from sparing uneducated hearers the labour and confusion of revolving many different ideas, he seems actually to revel in the bewildering abundance with which he pours them forth.

BURKE. Stay, stay, sir, for one moment, I beg of you. There must surely be some mistake as to the person of whom we are talking. Such a speaker as you describe could never have risen to eminence as an orator at all. I cannot myself believe that he has.

HORS. What! Mr. Burke? Not when I have told you that he converted a whole people by his speeches.

BURKE. History may perpetuate the memory of the conversion, but the manner in which it was wrought will soon fade into legend. These wonder-working speeches were recorded, I suppose, and are preserved. How then, if his oratory were really such as you describe it, will posterity credit his power?

HORS. That question is easily answered. Posterity will not credit it at all. The future student of English letters will gaze in blank amazement upon pages covered by the convolutions of interminable sentences, and will reject as mythical the tradition that their articulate utterance can ever have stirred a human heart. Coil by coil he will unroll the interpllicated mass, and, unable to realise the swift and sinuous charm of its living movement, and its wonder of entanglement ever threatening and ever escaped, he will see no more beauty in it than one sees in the body of a dead snake.

BURKE. What! is the skin then so lustreless? The hues of many a reptile are as bright in death as in life. Is there no sheen of imagery, no flash of epigram, no gleam of humour, no glow of poetry by which the magic of spoken words may be perpetuated to the eye and mind, when tongue of speaker and ear of hearer have long mouldered into dust?

HORS. None, or almost none. The man was indeed a scholar, with a scholar's feeling for style: and the lighter exercises of his pen have even shown a vein of poetry in his nature. But you shall look in vain for any literary quality in his oratory. He was extremely sparing of metaphor, though that, to my thinking, is no fault; but it were better to have abjured it altogether than to be remembered by the one common-place image which is alone associated with his rhetoric. The Javan upas tree suggested to

him—but it is hardly humane, perhaps, to dissect an orator's only metaphor in cold blood. It savours too much of the allegorical brutality imagined in the parable of Nathan. Yet stay! I wrong him. Of late his admirers here have been reciting to me a new flight of his, achieved since I left the earth, and I admit its remarkable merit. He was speaking of the Christian races of Turkey, and he said of them: "They were like a shelving beach which restrained the ocean. That beach, it is true, is beaten by the waves; it is laid desolate; it produces nothing; it becomes perhaps nothing but a mass of shingle, of rock, of almost useless sea-weed; but it is a fence behind which the cultivated earth can spread and escape the incoming tide; and such was the resistance of Bulgarians, of Servians, and of Greeks. It was that resistance which left Europe to claim the enjoyment of her own religion and to develop her institutions and her laws." There you have it, sir; it is a picturesque image, I admit, one that you yourself need not have disdained, and it has that highest merit of oratorical metaphor, that it is image and argument in one. But—unless we are to reckon that unfortunate upas tree—it is the ewe-lamb, sir, it is the ewe-lamb.

BURKE. But what of epigram, humour, and the other gifts I have mentioned?

HORS. Epigram, sir, as you must surely see, was entirely foreign to the genius of his diffident style;

and of humour he was singularly destitute. He will not even live in the library in virtue of that phrase-making faculty, that aphoristic gift, which you think all popular orators must necessarily possess. Did you not speak of such an orator as able to embody both truth and fallacy in telling phrases which pass into the currency of the market-place and the workshop?

BURKE. I did, and I look upon this power, I repeat, as one of the surest tests of his royal rank, proclaiming his sovereignty as clearly as a coin records a reign.

HORS. Well, then, he is a king without a coinage. No one, at least has ever seen or handled it. You did not mean, I know, that the phrase-making gift is an absolute and exclusive appanage of oratorical royalty. Many inferior men have possessed it: many a petty baron has so passed himself off for his suzerain. But though all who have it are not kings, no king before this one has ever been without it. He has minted nothing: no gold, no silver piece in our language is stamped with his image and his name. His words are but the counters of thought, worn smooth and edgeless, before he handled them, by the attrition of a thousand tongues. Roughly it may be, but still with sufficient accuracy should I sum up the matter if I were to say that quantity and not quality is of the essence of his speech. He conquers as the torrent conquers—by volume, by volubility, by incessant and resistless flow.

BURKE. But discourses of that kind must surely perplex rather than persuade the unskilled hearer.

HORS. It astonishes, which is better than either. I have already told you, Mr. Burke, that power in England has descended to a class whose favour may be more easily reached through the emotions than the understanding; and the simplest and most primitive of their emotions is the surest to appeal to. It is easier for an orator to open their mouths than their minds; and he who by dazzling dexterity of tongue shall have excited most of that gaping wonder which is bestowed in the fair-booth on nimbleness of the fingers, possesses the greatest power over them. The bumpkin stares to see the juggler draw yards of tape from his mouth: why not to see him produce an unbroken and interminable string of sentences from the same organ? The one is not more beyond the spectator's powers than the other.

BURKE. Nay, sir, this is trifling. Such arts as these can gain but a momentary mastery over even the rudest mind. Men may gape at a conjurer for an idle hour or two; but they would not bestir themselves to vote him into office as a reward for the amusement he has afforded them.

HORS. I did not profess, sir, to be explaining his political power: I was merely pointing out the secret of his oratorical fame. His political power is a product of several forces of which the merely



wonder-rousing quality in his oratory is but one. Chief among the others is the curiosity, the interest, and, for the less instructed, the admiration excited by his character and career.

BURKE. But what is it, then—nay, what can it be—that should charm them in such a character, if, indeed, it be reflected in his oratory? What can they find in such a career as I may suppose that character to have determined?

HORS. In the character they find power, and in the career success; and these are the idols to which human nature, bowing lowest in the lowest, will everywhere bend the knee. The more widely you extend political rights, and the more freely you commit government to the untutored instincts of mankind, the more surely shall you find the dominant influence in politics to be the worship of individual strength.

BURKE. You are of those, then, who hold that Democracy leads necessarily to Dictatorship?

HORS. Our English democracy of ignorance seems to have already led to it. The man of whom we have been speaking was the virtual dictator of his country: and it was from strength that he drew his strength. *Potest quia posse videtur*. He dominated his colleagues; he rode roughshod over his own former opinions; he refused to be constrained even by his own spoken words. But all these characteristics—the imperiousness of his nature, his

audacity of tergiversation, the 'astonishing sophistry with which he explained himself away,—all those characteristics which shock and alienate the scrupulous and the reflective, served only to strengthen that essentially *un*-moral conception of irresistible power which won him the allegiance of the masses. When he dragged the grandees of Whiggery at the tail of the Radical chariot; when he compelled an uneasy Legislature to burn what they had adored and adore what they had been wont to burn; when he stood up unappalled before the crowding ghosts of his former opinions and laid them with a wave of his enchanter's wand—his votaries among the multitude wasted no thought upon the moral aspect of these performances: all they had eyes for was the magnificent display of force, and before that idol of the modern world they instinctively bowed down and worshipped.

BURKE. And do you really mean to tell me that the astonishing influence of the man had no root whatever in the moral approval, the moral sympathy, of his countrymen?

HORS. Nay, Mr. Burke, I do not say so. It would be at once an unjust and an unintelligent analysis of the elements of his power. I spoke only of the sources of that boundless admiration with which the unthinking populace regarded him. He had yet another order of admirers, whose attachment to him was based even more upon veneration for his character

than upon wonder at his powers. In a word, he possessed adherents who not only applauded him, but believed in him—followers who followed him in the spirit of true discipleship, not merely to gaze upon his miracles, but to hearken reverently to his teachings. Great, indeed, was their faith—great even to the removal of mountains. No paradox of the master's doctrines, no conflict between his utterances, had power to shake for an instant their steadfast belief in his righteousness and truth. They were not staggered by his reconciliatory sophisms, for they saw no need of reconciliations at all. They accepted the self-contradictions of their master as one of the "antinomies" of the reason, which no more require, if they no more admit of, explanation to the feeble human understanding than does the *crux* of free will coexistent with Divine foreknowledge, or the mystery of God-sanctioned evil.

BURKE. But surely, sir, you must be speaking of a class of person almost as ignorant and superstitious as the populace itself.

HORS. By no means. They were mostly men of intelligence: they were all men of high principle and of scrupulous conscience: they were some of them men of deep and unaffected piety.

BURKE. You are merely multiplying incredibilities. How was it possible for such men to be so deluded?

HORS. By means, sir, of that gift of speech which you, I must say, so ungratefully underrate, and by

special virtue of one element therein which, though it has as yet been mentioned by neither of us, is, to my thinking, the real secret of an orator's power.

BURKE. You mean . . .

HORS. I mean the physical element—the strange magic in the mere sound of some voices, the calculated charm of their modulation, the magnetism of eye, of expression, and even of gesture.

BURKE. And did your orator, then, possess these things in such high perfection?

HORS. Sir, I can only tell you that, profoundly as I distrusted him, and lightly as, on the whole, I valued the external qualities of his eloquence, I have never listened to him even for a few minutes without ceasing to marvel at his influence over men. That white-hot face, stern as a Covenanter's, yet mobile as a comedian's; those restless, flashing eyes; that wondrous voice, whose richness its northern burr enriched as the tang of the wood brings out the mellowness of a rare old wine; the masterly cadences of his elocution; the vivid energy of his attitudes; the fine animation of his gestures;—sir, when I am assailed through eye and ear by this compacted phalanx of assailants, what wonder that the stormed outposts of the senses should spread the contagion of their own surrender through the main encampment of the mind, and that against my judgment, in contempt of my conscience, nay, in defiance of my very will, I should exclaim, "This is,

indeed, the voice of truth and wisdom. This man is honest and sagacious beyond his fellows. He must be believed ; he must be obeyed " ? And if such were the effect, however temporary, that this remarkable man produced upon me, who distrusted him intellectually and disliked him morally, judge, sir, how powerfully he must have influenced those who brought to him ready sympathies and a confiding mind.

## XIV

### NAPOLEON I., MICHELET, AND RENAN

REN. Continue, my dear M. Michelet. We are all attention.

MICH. No ; I have said enough. When once I know that I cannot convince, I cease to contend.

REN. But why ? The desire to make immediate converts is unworthy of a philosopher. Leave all such ambitions to the fanatic. Instruction should be as the sowing of the seed ; we have always to wait for the harvest ; and his is but a vulgar conception of the teacher's aim who will be satisfied with nothing but a sight of the gathered sheaves. For my own part, I should be well content to know that any thoughts of mine were germinating in the hearts of a later generation.

MICH. I am not speaking to a later generation here.

REN. No, dear colleague ; but you did so on earth, and there, doubtless, your thoughts are bearing fruit. To hear your exposition and defence of them

interests me deeply, as I feel sure it has interested your Imperial hearer also—though not perhaps for quite the same reason.

MICH. I know not whom you mean by my Imperial hearer. To me, General Bonaparte is only the first, and most illustrious citizen and subject of the Republic which he overthrew.

NAP. In what year were you born, M. Michelet ?

MICH. In 1798 ; exactly twenty days before our insensate schemes of Eastern conquest were destroyed, with the fleet and the naval power of our country, at the Battle of the Nile.

NAP. Ha ! Then you were too young to get yourself into trouble under my rule. Had you been a dozen years older, I should assuredly have had to banish or imprison you along with the other vain and mischievous ideologues whose babble you have been repeating.

MICH. How well, General, did our admirable Paul Louis hit you off. Do you remember the passage in the *Réponse aux lettres anonymes* ? “Wishing to have all the talking to himself, he imposed silence, first on France, then upon Europe at large, and the whole world held its peace. Not a whisper was to be heard ; and no one complained of it, the system having at least this convenience about it, that we all knew where we were.”

NAP. H'm ! M. Courier was a most insubordinate officer. He coolly quitted his military duties to go

hunting after Greek manuscripts. Had I not been too busy at the moment to attend to the matter, I should certainly have had him shot.

REN. How providential, sire—I willingly give you that title, since for my part I am a less rigid Republican than my friend here, and I should undoubtedly have rallied to the First Empire—how providential, then, were your preoccupations! You would have been ordering a firing party for a master of our language.

MICH. And have illustrated, not for the first time in your own person, that spirit of brutal militarism which has been the curse of our country. Ah! General Bonaparte, what an opportunity you had, and what a use did you make of it! How truly did an English poet write of you—I detest the race; but they have poets who have said many great and wise things about liberty—

Thou mightst have built thy throne  
Where it had stood even now. Thou didst prefer  
A frail and bloody pomp which Time has swept  
In fragments to oblivion.

Shelley's testimony against you is the stronger because he goes on in this very sonnet to lament your downfall and to launch his curses at the *régime* which it brought back—

I know  
Too late, since thou and France are in the dust,  
That Virtue owns a more eternal foe  
Than Force or Fraud. Old Custom, Legal Crime,  
And bloody Faith, the foulest birth of Time.



Consider, O betrayer of our holy Revolution!—consider to what foes you surrendered France at the Restoration which you made inevitable! To Old Custom, to Legal Crime? Ay, truly! to the hoary tyranny and the licensed iniquities of the *ancien régime*. To bloody Faith? Again, yes! To the cruel and crushing yoke of the priest.

REN. Is chronology with you there, M. Michelet? Surely the rule of "bloody Faith," as your poet with foolish violence calls it, had an earlier Restoration than that of the Bourbons. Did not the First Consul re-establish it, or am I mistaken in the date of the Concordat?

NAP. Spare your irony, sir. You know well, I doubt not, that I made my peace with the Church while I was still First Consul. I should have been a fool to do other. In every country religion is useful to the ruler who knows how to use it, and it is his business to avail himself of its influence over mankind. I was a Mahommedan in Egypt, a Catholic in France.

MICH. A Catholic only, General? You are too modest. You were an Ultramontane. You brought back not only the faith but the domination of Rome. Ah, bluff and sturdy Augereau, the only one of your court who dared to speak the truth to you when ministries and ministers were silent! Do you remember how he answered you when, after that impious farce to which he and Lannes were unwillingly dragged—the solemn celebration of Mass at Notre

Dame, to commemorate the signature of the Concordat—you asked him if anything had been wanting to the completeness of the ceremony? “Nothing,” replied he, “except the million of men who perished in pulling down what you are setting up!”

NAP. Augereau was a bigoted boor, whose opinions on government and politics were not worth a pinch of snuff. I would have as soon sought a judgment on my policy from the first corporal I came across. I meant merely to ask the blockhead what he thought of the only thing he was capable of thinking about—the drill and management of the clerical procession.

MICH. You speak of your league with the Papacy, and labour to justify it as though it were your only crime. But the cause of the Revolution meant more—much more—than the emancipation of France from sacerdotal tyranny. It was the cause of liberty, equality, and fraternity; above all, it was the cause of justice. And you—you have thrown it back for more than a hundred years.

NAP. Your cause was in a flourishing state, then, I suppose, when I came on the scene? Liberty, fraternity, equality, forsooth! Liberty of the doomed wretches cowering under the Terror; fraternity with the truculent pedant who had climbed to supreme power; equality of the *marquise* with the *ouvrière* under the equating formula of Sanson’s axe! If I had done nothing else worthy of the gratitude of France, she would have owed it me for having stamped

out your precious "cause" in the bloody mire which its champions had made about its path.

REN. Unhappy Galilæans, whose blood our military Pilate mingled with their sacrifices! Were they sinners, I wonder, beyond all those of their fellow-citizens who thrust them into the Jacobin priesthood and applauded the hecatombs of French lives which they offered up day by day on the Revolutionary altar?

NAP. Sinners! Who cares? Does one inquire into the moral character of a raving lunatic before clapping the strait waistcoat on him?

MICH. 'And do you really found your claim to posthumous honour on the suppression of the Jacobins?

NAP. Not I. It is you who cherish the childish error that my work consisted in restraining the excesses of the Revolution, and that, having brought its forces under control and directed them into their true channels, I ought to have retired, like Cincinnatus, to my farm. Bah! It was not for curbing the violence and punishing the crimes of the Revolution that France enthroned me, but for crushing the Revolution itself.

MICH. What! And its aspirations so dear to the French heart; its ideals so nobly striven for, and which so many Frenchmen led, and laid down, heroic lives to realise?

NAP. Tell me, word-monger, what is the aspiration dearest to the French heart?

REN. A whisper of caution, dear M. Michelet, before you answer. It is these generalisations which are the Frenchman's snare. What if a national life be the resultant of conflicting aspirations?

• MICH. Nay! why should I hesitate to answer the question? Have I not watched France in history, toiling through the deserts and morasses of the Middle Ages, with her eyes for ever fixed on the two peaks of Liberty and Justice, rising calm, august, eternal, on the far horizon? • • •

NAP. Ha! On Liberty and Justice! Not on Unity and Strength! On the philosopher's dream of the Rights of Man, and not on the statesman's conception of the stable and symmetrical State, as a great political organism, in which men and their so-called rights are mere constituent units, of no other value or importance save as parts of a great organic whole! You think that the typical Frenchman, then, is an enthusiast for Individualism, and for the anarchy to which it leads?

MICH. If I did not think him so, I should despair not only of France, but of humanity itself.

REN. Ah! M. Michelet, let us not be too ready to despair of anything. May it not, I ask you again—may it not be through the interplay of opposing forces that nations grow?

MICH. It was towards its great ideals of Liberty and Justice that France was steadily advancing when you, General Bonaparte, grasped the helm. Nor do

I blame the violence with which you seized it. History would have forgiven you the 18th Brumaire, if, after sweeping away the fanatics whose bigotry and violence were disgracing the Revolution, you had been content to carry on its work. But for deliberately undoing it, her forgiveness will for ever be denied you.

NAP. If I want to see history mis-read and mis-interpreted, it is to the historian that I go. So I, then, if you please, was to carry on what you call the work of the Revolution? You look upon me as an evangelist of the gospel of Jean Jacques. *Blague!* I was the heir of the policy of Richelieu. I seized upon power, and I was acclaimed for seizing it, not that I might strive for the realisation of any visionary theory of the Rights of Man, but that I might firmly base and enduringly consolidate the commonwealth of France; not that I might carry on the work of the Revolution—which was finished, like that of all such convulsive uprisings, with the abuses which it swept away—but that I might resume and complete the work which the old monarchy had carried on until it perished of its own corruptions. And it was the desire of Frenchmen for the realisation of this ideal—a desire far more widely spread among them, and far more deeply rooted in their hearts, than those vague longings for liberty and justice which are all that M. Michelet can find there—this it was that gave me my fifteen years of absolute rule.

REN. Which, however, you did not devote exclusively, sire, to the work of consolidation. You diversified it, if I remember rightly, by certain military excursions into Austria and Prussia; and there was also one rather important interlude in your constructive labours which ended at Moscow.

NAP. My conquests were forced upon me by the jealousy of the other Continental States and by the implacable hostility of England. Nevertheless, I laboured assiduously at the task of State-building, and much of my work remains.

MICH. Remains! *Mon Dieu!* What is the blindness of the historian compared with that?

REN. The Emperor doubtless refers to the Code: a great achievement, I admit, but hardly a political one.

MICH. What else of your work as a ruler remains? It has been as fleeting as your conquests. And, since your departure, what repeated revivals have we seen of the true Revolutionary ideal! The nation which you think indifferent to liberty and justice has for eighty years foregone all repose in its untiring search for them. If your nephew drugged it into stupor for eighteen years, it was only that it might awaken like a giant refreshed. Who ever made a stronger or more centralised State than he? No one; and if that was all that Frenchmen were longing for, they would assuredly have confirmed him and his dynasty in power for a generation to come. But we know—we can all see clearly enough

now, that, ere he fell, the nation had finally rejected him, and that he knew it. It was to escape the ignominy of political overthrow that he rushed upon the suicide of war. To what, General Bonaparte, do you attribute your nephew's downfall?

NAP. To the weakness of his will, to the irresolution of his counsels, and to the disorders of his health.

MICH. It was not so. These things may have contributed to it. But its determining cause was something far stronger, far higher, than they. It was the insatiable hunger of the French people for what I have called the true Revolutionary ideal, and their nobly unalterable refusal to exchange it even for political quietude and national prosperity. It is this which has given over France to her eighty years of agitation and unrest.

REN. Yes, this—and her touching conviction that the earthly kingdom of heaven “suffers violence” like the heavenly one, and that the violent can “take it by force.”

MICH. What else could have condemned her to her long martyrdom? To what else could she ever have looked to, as its palm? France not an enthusiast for liberty! As well might you fling a charge of Atheism at the Christian in the arena!

REN. Justice, however, dear M. Michelet, appears now to have disappeared from her ideal. There are some of us who miss it—the unhappy Captain Dreyfus, perhaps, among the number.

MICH. True, there is the unhappy Captain Dreyfus. That name reminds me that I was wrong in taunting General Bonaparte with the total disappearance of his work. The brutal spirit of militarism which he aroused and fostered appears still as a witness against him.

NAP. Yes ; it is even now the one thing which unites France.

MICH. Unites, and not divides her ?

REN. Yet we seem to have heard of Dreyfusards as well as anti-Dreyfusards of late, even here.

NAP. Dreyfusards ! Yes. They are to be found among doctrinaires and visionaries, like M. Michelet here. But the bulk of the nation was on the other side.

MICH. I doubt it. Nothing but overwhelming popular pressure could have forced the Government to grant a re-trial of the case.

NAP. Pooh ! what is a French Government of these days that any pressure to which it yields should be deemed overwhelming on that account ?

REN. May I ask, sir, if you approved of the proceedings of your general staff ?

NAP. No, I would have cashiered the bunglers to a man ; though not before overhauling their secret service accounts. But, judgment having been pronounced against the accused officer, it should have stood, though the heavens fell.

REN. *Fiat injustitia, ruat cælum.*



NAP. You might find a better whetstone to sharpen your tongue upon than me, M. Renan. Did I ever prefer justice to reason of State? Or did ever any other ruler worthy of the name?

MICH. No, General, I admit that your preferences in that regard were well known. A terrible proof of them lay buried till the Restoration under the ramparts of Vincennes.

NAP. Enough, sir; we are talking of another traitor to the State.

MICH. Captain Dreyfus had a longer trial than the Duc d'Enghien, but an even more iniquitous one. And you, General Bonaparte, would have upheld the verdict?

NAP. All, save a noisy and mutinous minority of the French nation were for upholding it.

MICH. I will never believe it.

NAP. No man of your stamp will ever believe anything that will not fit into his theories. It is true, nevertheless.

REN. You hold, then, sire, that oppression and injustice have become the ideals of the French nation?

NAP. No, M. Renan; but I hold that the ideal which has dominated the race throughout their whole history is an ideal of the State as a strong, a centralised, an all-embracing power, and that in presence of any danger which threatens the concrete embodiment of that ideal, such abstractions as "liberty" and "justice" dwindle into empty words.

REN. Yet in its concrete embodiment as a French Ministry, the State, *sire*, does not seem to impress the people as much as one might expect.

NAP. Who knows the reason better than you? Is there any one among those shadowy groups which have been filing feebly past on the stage of French history since my nephew's fall—is there among them any one which has seemed to you to typify the authority of a great and self-sufficing State?

REN. I hesitate to reply. I am certainly unable to recall *any*; but, then, I am equally unable to remember them all. Who can say that in so long and rapidly moving a procession, an ideal, or even a capable, French Ministry may not have escaped his eye?

MICH. Let us grant you that none such is to be found. Where, then, does this strange monster of your despot's imagination, this Conservative, order-loving, strength-seeking Frenchman find the realisation of his ideal?

NAP. In the army. How could it be otherwise? With Parliamentarism dead and rotting above ground, and government after government perishing of the miasma of its decay, what other source of authority, what other force of cohesion, remains? To the Frenchman of to-day who looks for facts and cares not for phrases, the power and the prestige of the army seem to sum up all that divides the State from chaos; and to loose that last bond of civic union would be to reduce the only remaining fasces

of civic authority to a heap of useless faggots. No wonder "reason of State" has meant more to them in these late distractions than love of justice, and that they have striven to make the former prevail.

MICH. A nation that strives for anything but the triumph of justice is foredoomed to death.

NAP. A nation that sets anything above the common weal—and "reason of State" is the expression of the common weal—will taste of hell before it dies.

REN. Yours, sire, is indeed a creed of desolation.

MICH. It is hateful to God and man.

REN. And yours, M. Michelet, is a creed of convulsion. But there is surely common ground between you. For with your clearness of vision, sire, you can hardly believe that injustice is a good, permanent foundation on which to build a State.

NAP. I never said so. I said that the interest of the community at large, which begins and ends with the strength, the dignity, the authority of the State, must take precedence of the rights and liberties, the happiness—ay, and the life, of the individual citizen. There are countries in which you can put the latter aims in the foreground without endangering the former; but of these countries France is not one.

MICH. By what right do you say that, who never tried the reverse order of procedure?

NAP. By the right, M. Michelet, which he exercises who affirms that a razor should be held by the handle, without having tried the preliminary

experiment of cutting his fingers by taking hold of the blade.

REN. Then the way to approach the French nation so as to capture and to rule them, was as self-evident as that illustration implies?

NAP. To me, undoubtedly.

REN. But not, as we see, to M. Michelet.

NAP. No, nor to many thousands—perhaps to millions—of M. Michelets. They have failed and fail to govern, or to get government for France, because they did not and do not know the people about whom they prate. I succeeded because I knew France and Frenchmen far better than they knew themselves.

## XV

### LUCRETIUS, PALEY, AND DARWIN

LUC. It is enough: I would leave you. I go to sit at the feet of my master Epicurus, from whom men first learnt to shake off the chains of superstition, and to see in the universe the frame and fashionings of eternal matter. Why would you detain me?

DAR. I would detain you, Lucretius, to question you further upon your doctrine of atoms.

PAL. And I to learn from you how you reconcile your presence here with your theory of the materiality of the soul.

DAR. Nay, Dr. Paley; it is surely rather for us to reconcile those powers of speech which we are now exercising, with the theory of the immateriality of the soul. So long as we retain such powers we must certainly account our nature to be in some sense material. For all that we speak of ourselves as disembodied spirits, our life in the Shades can be only a continuation under physical, if highly etherealised, conditions of our life on earth.

LUC. Thou art right, O greatest of the philosophers ; and it doth in no wise shake the Epicurean argument that we have prolonged our conscious existence for a certain period beyond its terrestrial span.

PAL. I perceive, then, that you are incorrigible in your atheism, and that we must await the time appointed by God for its correction and chastisement. Do you, in your impious audacity, accept those terms of maintaining it ?

LUC. I could not decline them if I would.

PAL. Ay, but I mean, do you accept them confidently ? Do you accept them without misgiving ?

LUC. If I have rightly judged of the Divine nature, the gods will concern themselves as little with my atheism as with any other of the affairs of men. If I have judged wrongly of it, I know not what that nature is, and I cannot tell, therefore, whether the gods are any more likely to punish atheism than to reward it.

PAL. You had no reverence even for the gods whom you believed in ?

LUC. Had I not ? Yet I thought I spoke of them with awe. I find nothing at least of irreverence in this—

• Omnis enim per se Divôm natura necesse est  
Immortali ævo summâ cum pace fruatur,  
Semota a nostris rebus, sejunctaque longe ;  
Nam, privata dolore omni, privata periclis,  
Ipsa suis pollens opibus, nihil indiga nostri,  
Nec bene promeritis capitur, nec tangitur irâ.

Nor is this, I think, a contemptuous description of the blessed calm of their abodes—

Apparet Divò n numen sedesque quietæ  
 Quas neque concutiant venti, neque nubila nimbis  
 Adspargunt neque nix acri concreta pruina  
 Cana cadens violat ; semperque innubilis æther,  
 Integit et large diffuso lumine ridet.

PAL. The lines, adapted by-the-by from Homer, are certainly elegant. But I have never denied you the praise of an ingenious poet. Your condemnation, however, will be the heavier on that account.

LUC. Do the gods, then, hate good verses ?

PAL. No ; but they love not those who abuse good gifts. Your very skill in composition ('tis the same word "condere" for the building up both of a poem and of the universe) should have taught you to believe in the Divine Artificer of things. How would you have liked the men of my time to refer your own hexameters to a "fortuitous concourse of dactyls and spondees" ?

LUC. I should not, at any rate, have punished them for their error ; though I am more concerned about my fame as a poet than the gods seem to be about their reputation as architects.

DAR. May we not say too, Dr. Paley, that posterity would have thus much less excuse for their scepticism that they are familiar as a matter of experience with the fact that poems originate in human design ?

PAL. Were you a poet yourself, Mr. Darwin ?

DAR. Not I, indeed.. I spent my life in scientific inquiry.

PAL. There was a namesake of yours whom I remember as the author of some pleasing verse.

• DAR. He was my grandfather, sir ; and I am glad his poetical compositions met with your approval. But why did you mention him? Were it not that you have praised verse so clear and intelligible as his, I should have feared that you were about to question my theory as to the origin of poetry. • •

PAL. Its origin in what?

DAR. In human design : for I must own, sir, that I sometimes find a difficulty in tracing modern poetry to any such source. The concourse of the words composing it too often appears, to me, at least, to be purely fortuitous.

PAL. I should, nevertheless, hesitate for my part to infer from the absence of any marks of human purpose that such poetry is of Divine origin.

DAR. I exercise a similar caution, Dr. Paley. But let us return to our great poet here—for I think you admit his greatness—and see how your argument has affected him. What says he to it?

LUC. That it is trifling with the matter. We have experience of men composing poems, but no one has seen the gods at work upon the universe.

PAL. What need of that? No one but your acquaintances ever saw you at work on the *De Rerum Natura*, but no one doubts that it was written by a



man; and if you say that they reason from the analogy of other poems which they know in fact to be the work of intelligence, I answer that precisely the same analogy is to be found in the works of creation.

LUC. If that is your argument, I have misunderstood your theory. I did not know that you believed the world to be the work of an intelligent man?

PAL. It is you, Epicurean, who are trifling now.

LUC. Why, what more does the argument prove?

PAL. Much more. The contrivance which we see in nature is like in kind to the ingenuity of an intelligent man, but infinitely greater in degree; and hence we infer that the world is the work, not only of a designing mind, but of a mind whose designs are distinguished by superhuman skill and wisdom. There is a perfection in the arrangement of the Cosmos which would have been unattainable by the devices of man.

LUC. I do not agree with you.

PAL. What! You are speaking impiously.

LUC. It cannot be impious to rebuke impiety; and what impiety could be more daring than to impute imperfect workmanship to the hands of the all-perfect gods? If the gods had really planned and executed the visible frame of things it could not show so many signs of the artificer's having stumbled in his work. I see nothing of that perfection of arrangements of which you speak; on

the contrary, I find many things ordered after a fashion which, so far from denoting cleverness infinitely above the human, appears rather to point to an intelligence somewhat below that standard.

• PAL. I know what you are aiming at now, but your suggested argument from the imperfections of nature can be easily answered. I wish it had been possible for you to read the twenty-sixth chapter of my *Natural Theology*.

LUC. I wish it had been. Is the poem in hexameters?

PAL. It is not a poem at all, but a prose dissertation; and I have therein proved, to the satisfaction of all who are not blinded by their presumption and the hardness of their hearts, that the world is the work of an infinitely wise and benevolent Being.

LUC. Was it the wisdom, then, or the benevolence which created the presumptuous and hard-hearted?

PAL. Your question only raises the old problem of the existence of evil, which I have very fully dealt with towards the close of my twenty-sixth chapter. I do not believe, however, that the apparent imperfections in nature have ever yet been the cause of atheism, however often they may have been alleged as its excuse. Once convince mankind, as I endeavoured to do, that the world is the work of a Supreme Intelligence, and the immense preponderance of good over evil in its arrangement will speedily persuade them that those of the latter

character constitute only apparent deviations from an essentially beneficent plan.

DAR. You rely, in fact, Dr. Paley, on their recognising in the words of the *Essay on Man*, that "all discord" may be "harmony half-understood, all partial evil universal good."

PAL. Hum! I should be loth to adopt every theological statement of Mr. Pope's; but the lines you quote sufficiently express my meaning. The great matter is to demonstrate the Divine wisdom and power as displayed in the scheme of the universe; a conviction of the Divine justice and goodness will follow afterwards. Indeed, I would almost go so far as to say that Theism must, in my opinion, stand or fall with the design-argument.

DAR. Forgive me, Dr. Paley, for questioning the discretion of so famous an apologist; but surely—surely it is not wise to stake so much upon a single proof.

PAL. I did not expect you to think so, Mr. Darwin. You are in much the same case, I am afraid, as our Epicurean poet here.

DAR. I do not know that I have any reason to resent that imputation, sir; but neither do I know what right you have to make it.

LUC. It is an ascription of wisdom; for who was ever wiser than the Greek philosopher who first cast out fear?

PAL. One who has employed himself, as you have,

Mr. Darwin, in attempting to destroy the doctrine of final causes, must of necessity——

DAR. Excuse my interrupting you, but it would be fairer to describe my work as I myself describe it. I assure you I never conceived any animosity against the doctrine of final causes, and I did not go about to “destroy” either that or anything else. My aim was not destruction, but discovery.

PAL. 'Tis ever the infidel's plea, sir ; though, if the name offends you, I will ask your pardon for having applied it to you.

DAR. I do not take offence at names, Dr. Paley, and I should never even repudiate one, however offensive, which I had justly earned in the search after truth. It would be a penalty of my calling which I should be ashamed to shirk. But whether it is a just one or not it is for you to consider.

PAL. Your tone makes me uneasy, sir ; I trust I have not unwittingly transgressed the law of charity ; but, if so, I am sufficiently rebuked by your dignity and meekness. You were, however, about to describe your own work.

DAR. It was, as I have said, discovery and not destruction. Perhaps I shall best prevent mistakes in future, as to the aim of my researches, by quoting to you the title-page of my principal work. Its subject is described as *The Origin of Species by Natural Selection ; or, The Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. In that description,

sir, you cannot, I think, detect any preconceived hostility to the doctrine of final causes.

PAL. Nevertheless, your inquiries led you to its overthrow—or to what too many people regard as such ; and I was about to say that any man who himself arrives, and who lands others, at such conclusions as yours, must needs, I think, regard the Deity, if he admits the existence of such a Being, as the sect of the Epicureans regarded their shadowy gods.

LUC. So much the better. What more august position could he assign to his Deity ?

PAL. Say rather, Epicurean, what idler and more futile part in the scheme of things ? . . . But you do not answer my question, Mr. Darwin.

DAR. Let me answer it by another. Suppose, Dr. Paley, that you yourself should see reason to reject the doctrine of final causes, would your own theology at once become Epicurean ?

PAL. I cannot entertain the supposition upon which your question is founded. The teleological argument, as I believe you now call it, appears to me to be absolutely irrefragable.

DAR. It is natural that it should, considering the ability and learning which you devoted to its support. But I know how many scientific theories, supposed to be ultimate, have been found to need revision ; and I have always endeavoured to keep my mind open to all attempts at the correction of my own.

PAL. I applaud your candour, sir, but, considering the nature of your conclusions, you would be gravely culpable if you displayed less. I, on the other hand, as the advocate of opinions which, even if erroneous, would be less dangerous to human welfare (upon an average of happiness in both worlds), do not hold myself bound to the same amount of circumspection. Nevertheless, I have ever been ready, for the satisfaction of my own mind, to consider anything which can fairly be urged against my argument. And if I now dismiss what I understand to be your hypothesis explanatory of the appearance of design in creation, it is merely because I had anticipated and refuted it in my *Natural Theology*.

DAR. Indeed, Dr. Paley? You make me ashamed of the inattention with which I must have read you.

PAL. I fear that the refutation I speak of, has but too generally escaped notice.

LUC. Was it so, O excellent priest? Then you had done better to refute him in good poetry. There is some virtue in hexameters, after all.

PAL. The opposition between our two theories may, I think, be most concisely stated thus. According to mine, the organs in an animal which are adapted to a useful purpose must have been designedly given him in order to enable him to exist; according to yours, their existence and his are only two aspects of the same fact. While I ask, How should these organs be found in the creature, unless a Creator had specially

designed him to live? 'you, on the other hand, ask, How could this creature be living unless somehow or other he had come to be provided with the organs? Do you admit that to be a fair account of the difference between us?

DAR. Yes, reduced to its lowest terms.

PAL. Then mark, if you please, how, in the fourth paragraph of the fifth chapter of my *Natural Theology*, I have anticipated your theory. "There is another answer (to the argument from design) which has," I say, "the same effect as the resolving things into chance, which answer would persuade us to believe that the eye, the animal to which it belongs, every other animal, every plant, indeed, every organised body which we see, are only so many out of the possible varieties and combinations of being which the lapse of infinite ages has brought into existence; that the present world is the relic of that variety; millions of other bodily forms and other species having perished, being" (mark this), "by the defect of their constitution, incapable of preservation or of continuance by generation." There, sir, you have your hypothesis, and here is my reply. I point out that "there is no foundation whatever for this conjecture in anything which we observe in the works of nature;" that "no such experiments are going on at present, no such energy operates as that which is here supposed, and which should be constantly pushing into existence new varieties of beings."

LUC. And, wrangling thus over their methods of workmanship as though they were so many potters, you talk of your "reverence" for the gods!

PAL. In that passage, which I have just quoted, Mr. Darwin, I anticipated your famous discovery, and showed it, with submission, to be a discovery of something which did not exist.

DAR. Nay, Dr. Paley, the real fact is that you have misapprehended the nature of my work. I am not at all anxious to arrogate to myself the exclusive credit of the guess—for at such a stage you cannot call it a hypothesis—that existing species may be simply the survivals from a larger number of pre-existing species; nor do I, even claim an inventor's property in the far more fruitful thought, that the surviving races of animals and plants must owe their existence and their peculiar adaptations of structure to a gradually acquired fitness for the conditions by which they are surrounded. The former of these ideas has probably floated vaguely through many inquiring minds at all periods of the history of science; the latter in a more or less indefinite form was in the air at the time when I began to write, and took distinct shape in the mind of another naturalist almost simultaneously with its realisation in my own.

PAL. Then where, pray, sir, is the mighty credit of your achievements?

DAR. What services, you mean, have I been able to render to science? Well, just the services, I hope,



that any fairly intelligent and zealous servant would have been able to render in my place. By actual study of the behaviour of plants and animals under domestication, I strove to satisfy myself not only as to the reality of my hypothetical process of development, but as to the exact mode in which it operated.

PAL. But how, sir, could you possibly bring so vast an inquiry within the compass of investigation by experiment?

LUC. Did you see your Divine Artificer at work?

DAR. It is a long story, and I must ask you to take it on trust from me, that my inquiries powerfully confirmed my hypothesis. And that hypothesis, I should tell you, was considerably more definite than the one which you claim to have refuted by anticipation. To conjecture that the organs of animals seem designed for their respective uses because only animals possessing such organs have survived; or even to add that the cause of the disappearance of all other animals is a "defect of their constitutions, rendering them incapable of preservation or of continuance by generation"—to conjecture thus, I say, is not to offer a scientific hypothesis explanatory of the facts. For how could the truth of so vague a guess be tested? No scientific hypothesis has been framed until we have assumed the operation of some general law which would tend to protect or redeem certain species from these destructive "defects of constitution," so that

while other species perished they should be "capable of preservation and continuance by generation."

PAL. And do you really imagine yourself, Mr. Darwin, to have discovered such a law?

DAR. In common, sir, with most other observers of nature, I had remarked the tendency of all species to slight variations from the normal type; and by experiments designed expressly to that end, I more fully demonstrated, what the less methodical proceedings of breeders had gone some way to prove before, that it is possible, by selecting and propagating examples of these variations, to produce varieties of a single species which shall differ more widely from the parent stock than many distinct species differ from each other. Assume now that any one species were, in the wild state, to develop a variation which should give it a slight advantage over its competitors in the struggle for existence—some peculiarity which should make it better able to find, or gather, or store its vegetable food, to perceive or pursue its prey, to descry, to flee, or to conceal itself from its enemies. In that case the operation of natural causes might be expected to do for such an animal what is done for the domesticated creatures by the designing agency of man—to perpetuate, that is to say, and to develop these useful accidents of structure, until we find a world of creatures abounding in those exquisite adaptations of means to ends which fill my mind, no less, believe me, than they

filled yours, with abiding emotions of reverential wonder.

PAL. I am at a loss to understand, sir, how, as you interpret them, they could inspire you with any sentiments of the kind. I cannot but regard your hypothesis, Mr. Darwin, with an invincible repugnance.

DAR. I am truly sorry to hear it. I can see nothing in it to deserve such a reception even from the most sensitively religious mind.

LUC. Unhappy disputants! Never, through all eternity, will you agree. See how inevitably spring these vain contentions from your primal error in believing that the Immortals trouble the peace of their immortality by meddling with earthly things.

PAL. The more I reflect upon your theory, the more convinced I am that it is destructive of the religious instincts.

DAR. Reflect still further upon it, sir, and you will find those instincts not only revived, but strengthened.

PAL. Nay, Mr. Darwin, how can that be? It strikes at the root of belief in the providential government of the world.

DAR. If providential government suggests only the idea of the capricious, arbitrary, and spasmodic authority of an Oriental despot, then I agree with you: if not, I dissent from you wholly.

PAL. Why, does not the selection hypothesis cover, from the nature of the case, every conceivable

instance of what was believed to be the Divine forethought, the Divine ingenuity, the Divine benevolence?

DAR. Add, Dr. Paley, that it also covers those instances in which theologians have been sorely put to it to escape the necessity of ascribing not forethought but blindness, not ingenuity but unskilfulness, not benevolence but malice, to the Supreme Being; and that surely is no slight advantage to religion.

LUC. How so, O philosopher? Does not religion depend with you, as it depended with us, on a belief in the vindictive malice of your gods?

PAL. No, pagan, you are speaking now of your own *religio*, the superstitious and cowardly dread of the terrors of the unseen world. With us "religion" means love and adoration of a Supreme Being.

LUC. Ha! Then you have no hell? •

PAL. . . . The instances to which you refer, Mr. Darwin, are infinitesimally rare. And what I have said of the multitude of others is simply true. Every conceivable example of intelligent design may be represented as an example of automatic selection. Every beautiful and artificial structure, which I say has been expressly bestowed upon an animal by the Deity to enable him to live, you assert him to have fashioned for himself in the effort to prolong his own life. Your theory while it is the exact converse of mine, is absolutely coextensive with it.

DAR. Necessarily so, Dr. Paley; for your hypothesis claimed, I presume, to account for all the facts; and if mine did less than that, it would not be a hypothesis at all.

PAL. And do you mean to say, sir, that there are no facts which conflict with it?

DAR. It would be disingenuous to pretend that there are none which suggest difficulties—none which at present refuse to take their place among the details of the scheme. Still, the facts which confirm the evolution hypothesis, so enormously exceed in number, and for the most part so materially surpass in significance, those which appear to militate against it, that I have always held, and hold at this moment, an unshaken belief in its truth.

PAL. I cannot but hope that Providence may bring to light some overwhelming refutation of it. To me personally it would be a cruel chagrin to discover that one of the chief labours of my life was lost, and that the edifice of faith which I was at so much pains to construct was founded on an imaginary basis.

LUC. On what other basis are most philosophies founded? And with what other motive have their authors clung to them, especially in old age, save this—that they too might not lose “the labour of their lives”?

PAL. You, however, Mr. Darwin, will not suspect that I am biased by any such personal considerations, in believing, as I do firmly believe,

that your doctrines are fraught with the most mischievous consequences to mankind.

DAR. Did I believe so myself, I should welcome the destruction of my own life's labours by the overthrow of my theory. But I cannot myself perceive the mischievous consequences which you find in it.

PAL. What, sir! does it not abase the dignity of the universe, and extinguish those feelings of awe and admiration which must precede all religion?

DAR. Most emphatically must I answer, No. On the contrary, I contend that it exalts rather than abases that dignity. And as to feelings of awe and admiration, I have said, and I repeat, that I find an especial grandeur in that view of life which conceives its several powers as "having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms or into one; and that while this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been and are being evolved."

LUC. You have debated learnedly, O philosophers, and the skill of your arguments is apparent even to me, who hold with neither. The gods, I am convinced, are not the artificers of the world; but if they have created, they assuredly do not regulate it.

PAL. You see, Mr. Darwin, that I was not far wrong in confounding you with the Epicureans. This poet's ready acceptance of your hypothesis as the sole condition on which he would consent to qualify

his blank materialism, will show how narrow is the interval which divides you.

LUC. Narrow, O priest! It seems to me that we are not less widely parted than the Poles.

DAR. And to me also the interval which you call narrow appears well-nigh infinite. For such, I think, is the difference between him who postulates and him who rejects a supernatural origin for the material universe.

PAL. Theoretically it may be so, but in practice it is quite otherwise. The mass of mankind will never be able to reverence a Creator who has withdrawn Himself from the conduct and control of things from the moment of their creation onwards. How, think you, will they be able to distinguish such a Deity from the Epicurean gods? Nay, how essentially would He differ from them in fact? For one moment only in eternity has He been otherwise, and ever since His existence has been like theirs—

*Semota a nostris rebus, sejunctaque longe.*

Are you sure, Mr. Darwin, that blind mortals who go thus far in negation will not soon learn to add that last despairing line of the Epicurean's creed, and say of Him whom they should regard as the righteous Judge of all their words and actions—

*Nec bene promeritis capitur, nec tangitur ira?*

LUC. And you think it a nobler faith for "blind

mortals" to believe in a Creator who can be wheedled or incensed by the creatures of His hand?

DAR. We have ceased to hold, Dr. Paley, that the religious beliefs of men are greatly influenced by speculations on the origin and development of life upon the globe. Alike among the most powerful and the most pious minds of my time, the conviction had gained ground that man must look within him for his religion rather than without.

PAL. 'Tis very well to say so, sir; but what, pray, will he find within him to reward his search? A conscience? And if so, by whom implanted, and by what means developed? Is it in the struggle for existence that men have learnt their duty to their neighbour, and that the virtues of charity and continence, of probity and mercy, have gained their footing in the human soul?

DAR. Out of the struggle for existence was born the tribal instinct, and this in turn has been the parent of those self-protecting qualities which are as necessary to the survival of the tribe, as are strength, and cunning, and fleetness to the survival of the isolated individual. And will you not admit, sir, that it is no less easy to believe in, and to adore, a Deity who, out of the blind battle of creation, had ordained the evolution of so noble an organ as the conscience, and the development of so high a function as the moral conduct, than it were to believe in and adore a Creator who had once for



all implanted His law in a single pair of human hearts?

PAL. For the belief in His power and for the adoration of its majesty the one conception may doubtless serve as well as the other. But as bases for man's recognition of Him as a moral Governor who will reward obedience and punish disobedience to His law, the two conceptions are of vastly unequal value. Is the righteous Judge of all the earth visit the "undeveloped" with punishment for their imperfections?

DAR. Why not the "undeveloped" as well as the "unregenerate"? Nay, come, Dr. Paley, you are beckoning me to a region of mystery where you can walk with no surer foot than mine.

PAL. Your theory, sir, is fatal to the doctrine of man's free will.

DAR. A doctrine, however, which some of the greatest of theologians have rejected as inconsistent with the foreknowledge of God. Nay, sir, if a man must needs embrace the sombre creed of the Calvinists, he can reach it by way of your hypothesis as easily as by mine; while, if his nature impels him to a more hopeful view of the Divine counsels, he will meet with no more obstacles in my hypothesis than in yours.

LUC. And with fewer in mine than in either.

PAL. May I, without impertinence, Mr. Darwin, inquire in what sort of estimation you were held among the orthodox Christians of your time?

DAR. I hardly know how to answer your question. I enjoyed the friendship of many of them, and incurred, so far as I am aware, the ill will of none. Why should I, indeed? I never assailed their doctrines.

PAL. But was not the Christian world alarmed by your speculations? Did it not protest against them? Had your contemporaries grown wiser than the Apostle, and did they believe that all danger from philosophy falsely so called had passed away?

DAR. No; but they thought, I imagine, that philosophy falsely so called could be exposed as false.

PAL. Indeed! Then truly they must have been sanguine. The conclusions of the philosophers are adopted by multitudes of men who are quite incapable of following the processes by which they have been reached, and who would therefore be equally unable to comprehend their refutation. And when such conclusions commend themselves to the vulgar as ministering to their love of self-indulgence, or tranquillising their fears of supernatural authority, they are only too likely to be adopted with eagerness.

LUC. I did not find it so. It is the vulgar who hug their superstitious fears most closely to their hearts.

DAR. The consequences which you apprehend from scientific inquiry would be unfortunate, I allow; but tell me, Dr. Paley, would you seriously counsel the inquirer to desist from his attempts to discover truth for fear that his discoveries should produce a

mischievous result in certain minds? He is bound to exercise especial caution in drawing his conclusions; he is bound to weigh the objections to them with especial care. But these obligations once fulfilled, and his judgment satisfied by the evidence, is he not to declare his convictions?

PAL. You do not state the case completely. The evidence for a Divine government—by which I mean a direct and perpetual superintendence of the world—is of two kinds, material and moral, and you must not allow yourself to reject the former until you have well considered whether its defects, whatever you may suppose them to be, are or are not made good by the latter. The testimony of the creation may fail to convince you that the Deity was the Artificer in detail, and is the ever-present Guide in action of the existing machinery of things, but the inward witness of your own heart may urge upon you with overwhelming force that He is. Are you sure, sir, that you have properly interrogated it?

DAR. All thoughtful men interrogate it, Dr. Paley, and at all seasons. But the answer that it returns is not capable of being tested by the understanding. It does not speak in the language of thought, but in that of emotion; and I cannot believe that the Author of our intellectual faculties could ever have intended us to depose them in favour of impulse and aspiration at the very moment and in respect of the very matters in which it is most important

that the supremacy of the understanding should be unchallenged.

PAL. You cannot have seen whither your argument is leading.

DAR. On the contrary, I have not only reasoned it out to its conclusion, but have acted upon it. It leads to the total separation of the intellectual faculties from the religious instincts. Yet whenever in the intervals of my study I have paused to survey the fruits of my work, the contemplation of them has but served to deepen that feeling of awe which you have rightly described as the chief factor in the devout emotions of the heart.

LUC. Awe! Awe of a Deity who once set the ball a-rolling, and has ever since let it roll as it will!

PAL. Do you actually, then, lay claim, sir, to the title of a Christian?

DAR. Why not? I conformed, and with no feeling of insincerity, to the popular religion, accepting it as the highest and most satisfying form of homage to that all-embracing Mystery which I could no more fathom than the most untutored of the worshippers in the little church of my village.

PAL. It is not for me, sir, to say that your adoration was rejected by the all-merciful Being to the majesty of whose power your speculations—forgive me—have done such sad dishonour.

DAR. If it is not for you to say so, Dr. Paley, it is for no man. But I must once more protest against

your description of my doctrines. To theorise in this sense or in that on the Creator's mode of operation can never, to my thinking, do His power dishonour. That could only be done by those who deny His energies and His existence altogether—by those who feel no mental necessity for imagining, no moral necessity for adoring, a great First Cause.

PAL. I perceive, sir, that here, as upon earth, a man will always have atheism to begin where his own opinions end. It is something hard, however, for our friend the follower of Epicurus that you should thus decline to bear him company to the consequences of a common audacity in speculation—that you should leave him alone to face the charge of dishonouring the Divine power, and to submit to its penalties.

DAR. I know not whether there be any such penalties, Dr. Paley; nor do I find it easy to believe that a just and merciful Being could punish any one for error incurred in the honest and conscientious employment of faculties which He Himself has both bestowed and limited.

LUC. And whether it be so or not, O philosophers, be assured that I await the future with composure. I did not unlearn and unteach the fear of hell, in life, that I should submit to it again after death. Allow, too, O my friends, that thus far we have seen neither Cerberus nor Furies, neither vulture of Tityus, nor wheel of Ixion, nor thirst-throes of Tantalus: and

that I seem confirmed, therefore, in my theory that the more terrible of these dread imaginings do but symbolise the apprehended punishments of the wicked upon earth—are but reflected images of that *metus poenarum* which.

. . . pro malefactis  
Est insignibus insignis, scelerisque luela  
Carcer, et horribili de saxo jactu' deorsum,  
Verbera, Carnifices, Robur, Pix, Lamina, Tadae.

On one point, however, in that theory I have, since hearing your disputations, begun to doubt. Sisyphus, I said—

. . . in vitâ quoque nobis ante oculos est  
Qui petere a populo fascēs sevasque securēs  
Imbibit; & semper victus tristi-que recedit.

But, now that I have seen the elder of you two sages mourning over his stone at the foot of the hill, while the younger at the summit awaits the moment when his own shall descend to join it, I begin to suspect that the earthly antitype of Sisyphus was not the politician, but the philosopher.

THE END









